

Running Head: A PATCHWORK QUILT

**A Patchwork Quilt: A qualitative case study examining mentoring, coaching, and teacher
induction in the Western Québec School Board**

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Abstract

Mentoring, coaching, and teacher induction programs continue to gain traction in school jurisdictions across Canada and internationally in an effort to address teacher attrition, support professional growth, and improve teaching and learning. Conceptualized as a patchwork quilt, this thesis by article reports on a qualitative case study that examined the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) implemented in 2009 in the Western Québec School Board (WQSB). Each manuscript or fabric block highlights a different component of the TIP that when stitched together reveals an emerging pattern of how professional learning and development, mentoring and coaching, and teacher evaluation is understood in the school district. Anchored within a social learning theoretical framework, this study asked two guiding questions: 1) What is the influence of the mentor–coach role on experienced teachers’ professional learning, practice, and well-being? And 2) How do the WQSB stakeholders perceive the impact of the TIP? Using a single case study design, data were collected from a variety of sources and stakeholder perspectives, including documents, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. Using the Framework Method, data were abductively analyzed with and against the study’s theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The study’s findings indicate that the mentor–coach role has powerful potential to not only support experienced teachers’ practice-based professional learning, but also to cultivate their sense of well-being and flourishing in schools. However, tensions emerged around how different stakeholders perceived the TIP’s impact in the school district. In particular, further attention is required to clarify the purpose and process of mentoring and coaching as well as the role of teacher evaluation within teacher induction. Ultimately, this study highlights the important role an effective mentoring and coaching fellowship can play in supporting veteran teacher professional learning, practice and well-being, which then has the potential to cultivate positive transformational change in a school district.

Key words: mentoring, coaching, teacher induction, communities of practice, professional landscapes of practice, teacher well-being, flourishing, professional learning networks, teacher evaluation

Résumé

Les programmes de mentorat, d'encadrement et d'insertion professionnelle des enseignants continuent de gagner du terrain dans les écoles au Canada et à l'étranger, phénomène qui s'inscrit dans un effort pour lutter contre l'attrition des enseignants, soutenir la croissance professionnelle et améliorer l'enseignement et l'apprentissage. Conçue comme une courtepointe en patchwork, cette thèse sous forme d'article fait état d'une étude de cas qualitative portant sur le Programme d'insertion professionnelle (PIP) du nouveau personnel enseignant mis en œuvre en 2009 à la Commission scolaire Western Québec (CSWQ). Chaque manuscrit, ou morceau de tissu, met en évidence une composante différente du PIP. Une fois cousus ensemble, les morceaux révèlent un modèle émergent de la façon dont sont perçus au sein du district scolaire l'apprentissage et le perfectionnement professionnel, le mentorat et l'encadrement ainsi que l'évaluation des enseignants. Ancrée dans un cadre théorique d'apprentissage social, cette étude reposait sur deux questions directrices : 1) Quelle est l'influence du rôle de mentor-coach sur l'apprentissage professionnel, la pratique et le bien-être enseignants chevronnés? 2) Comment les intervenants de la CSWQ perçoivent-ils l'impact du PIP? À l'aide d'une étude de cas unique, les données ont été recueillies à partir d'une variété de sources et de points de vue des intervenants, y compris des documents, des questionnaires, des entrevues semi-structurées et des groupes de discussion. Suivant la méthode du cadre d'analyse, les données ont fait l'objet d'une analyse abductive avec les cadres théoriques et conceptuels de l'étude et par rapport à ceux-ci. Les résultats de l'étude indiquent que le rôle de mentor-coach présente un fort potentiel non seulement pour ce qui est de soutenir l'apprentissage professionnel basé sur la pratique des enseignants chevronnés, mais aussi de cultiver leurs sentiments de bien-être et d'épanouissement dans les écoles. Toutefois, des tensions sont apparues quant à la façon dont les divers intervenants percevaient l'impact du PIP dans le district scolaire. En particulier, il faudra s'attacher davantage à clarifier l'objectif et le processus du mentorat et de l'encadrement, ainsi que le rôle de l'évaluation des enseignants dans le contexte de l'insertion professionnelle. Au bout du compte, cette étude souligne le rôle important qu'un rapport de mentorat et d'encadrement efficace peut jouer dans le soutien du perfectionnement professionnel, de la

pratique et du bien-être des enseignants chevronnés, ce qui peut alors favoriser un changement transformationnel positif au sein d'un district scolaire.

Mots clés : mentorat, coaching, insertion professionnelle des enseignants, communautés de pratique, paysages professionnels de pratique, bien-être des enseignants, épanouissement, réseaux d'apprentissage professionnel, évaluation des enseignants.

Acknowledgements

At long last, I realized that I should write about quilters. Anyone who works on a quilt, who devotes her time, energy, creativity, and passion to that art, learns to value the work of her hands. And as any quilter will tell you, a quilter's quilting friends are some of the dearest, most generous, and most supportive people she knows.

Jennifer Chiaverini, (2013), p.xi

This thesis-by-article—my patchwork quilt—was truly a community effort. It was only possible through the continuous support, encouragement, guidance, and constructive feedback from family, friends, colleagues, supervisors, and mentors. I thank each and every one of my quilting guild for helping me reach this goal.

First, I am indebted to my colleagues at the Western Québec School Board, the site for this study. Specifically, I want to thank the study's participants—the teaching fellows, mentor-coaches, administrators, consultants, and WQTA executive—who trusted me with their stories and experiences. It was a privilege to learn with and from you and I am inspired by your work as educators to make the lives of children in the WQSB better. Thank you also to Mike Dubeau for your brilliant leadership as Director General, my colleagues in the Tip Team, Amy Curry, Jeff Harvey, and Kate Smith, and my leadership mentors George Singfield and Terry Kharyati. Your collaborative spirit, talent, and engagement as practitioners keeps my fires burning.

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Dedication

To Pierre: Thank you for everything. This wouldn't have been possible without your unwavering support and love.

To Molly, Max, and Kalla: Thank you for cheering me on and for always keeping me grounded in what really matters. You grew up alongside this quilting project and are a beautiful reminder that students should always be at the heart of any educational research endeavour.

This work is dedicated to you.

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Abbreviations

MC	Mentor–Coach
MCF	The Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship
MEES	Ministère de l'Éducation et Enseignement supérieur/ Ministry of Education and Higher Education (Québec)
MELS	Ministère de l'éducation, du loisir et du sport/ Ministry of Education and Higher Education (Québec)
MEQ	Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec/ Ministry of Education and Higher Education (Québec)
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PL	Professional Learning
PL	Professional Learning Network
MC PLN	Mentor–Coach Professional Learning Network
PGP	Professional Growth Portfolio
PLD	Professional Learning and Development
PRO Teaching Form	Professional Rubric for the Observation of Teaching Form
TF	Teaching Fellow
TIP	Teacher Induction Program
WQSB	Western Québec School Board

Chapter 1—Introduction: A Quilting Primer

This is a drawing together of threads,

A piecing together of the past and the future,

A time to stop and consider where you've been,

where you're heading.

Ellis, (2012), Quilt Love, p.6

This research project, my patchwork quilt, has been a labour of love. Ranging from simple and utilitarian to sophisticated and artistic, the patchwork or pieced quilt is a quilt made up of different fabrics sewn together in a variety of ways. As a thesis by articles, this quilt is a qualitative composition of different manuscripts or fabric blocks that when stitched together tell the story of teacher induction in a small English school district in Western Québec, Canada. Conceptualized as a patchwork quilt, this dissertation is made up of eight chapters that each represent a different component of the finished quilt. These components and the patchwork quilt metaphor are described in more detail within the dissertation's first three chapters. Essentially, each published manuscript represents one fabric block in the quilt top and highlights a specific area of focus in the school district's teacher induction context. In each block, the voices of

diverse stakeholders have been threaded together with empirical, professional, and theoretical literature around the key topics of professional learning networks, mentoring and coaching, and teacher evaluation. When this top is stitched onto the quilt back, the context of Western Québec School Board (WQSB), a larger pattern of one district's experience with a bespoke mandatory Teacher Induction Program (TIP) is revealed.

The act of cutting and piecing the quilt's fabric blocks together to make something practical and meaningful has been an incredibly personal journey. As a qualitative quilter, I recognize that I am weaving a story from the threads of my participants' lives; my own hand and heart are never far removed from the process. Concomitantly, creating a quilt from fabric that is woven with memories and emotion from my place of work has added another level of challenge and meaning throughout the process. As I take a step back to reflect on this research project, I know I have been profoundly changed by this quilting process and hope that this case study is as valuable to my participants and school district as it has been to me.

As a novice quilter, it is difficult to admire what has been pieced together over the past six years without fixating on all the loose threads, imperfections and dropped stitches. As much as this work still feels unfinished, I know that there comes a time for all quilters to move to the final binding stage and enclose the raw edges of their quilt. For me, this time is now. So, within these pages I present my hand-sewn perfectly imperfect patchwork quilt. Although I have tried to leave sufficient room for my readers to make their own meanings from the work, I offer this introductory chapter as a quilting primer. It is aimed to be a guide to help trace the overall quilt pattern, illuminate some of the key features of the individual fabric blocks and finally, highlight some of the quilting design choices I have made along the way.

As a whole, this patchwork quilt captures the WQSB's engagement in teacher induction, mentoring, coaching, and teacher evaluation. The main focus of the qualitative case study was to examine the lived experience of veteran teachers who took up a mentor-coach (MC) role within the WQSB's Teacher Induction Program (TIP). The context of the WQSB as well as the TIP's design, development, and structure is outlined in greater detail in the dissertation's first published (2017) manuscript (Chapter Two). Like this dissertation, the TIP is also conceptualized as a patchwork quilt. Whereby the TIP's quilt back is framed by the district's context and provincial guidelines, its quilt top stitches together the numerous influences, initiatives, commitments, district partners and key stakeholders that form its fabric blocks. In the district, teacher induction is best conceived of as a 'helping mechanism' (Serpell, 2000, p.3).

Ultimately, the WQSB's TIP has three clear aims:

- 1) to retain effective teachers new to the district
- 2) to provide leadership and professional growth opportunities for veteran staff
- 3) to improve teaching and learning across the school district.

With no clear provincial directions to guide its design, the TIP was first developed by a volunteer committee of teachers, administrators and district personnel and piloted in 2008. It was fully implemented in all schools across the district in 2009. Each year, the TIP pattern evolves and changes in response to key stakeholder feedback. As such, the current quilt design looks very different from the inaugural 2008 piloted version. It is important to disclose from the outset of this dissertation that not only was I one of these early committee members, but I have also been the TIP's co-coordinator (2009 to 2017) and an MC (2017 to 2019). This connection to the district has afforded me a unique perspective and access to the program's history, documentation, key stakeholders, and ongoing practice. Outlined in more detail in Chapter

Three, my ‘pracademic’ positionality as a dual citizen—both insider and outsider—is stitched into every part of this quilt’s story.

Using a qualitative case study design, the inquiry project examined the WQSB’s TIP through a social learning lens (Wenger, 1998; Wenger-Trayner et al, 2015). The theory of communities of practice is a socially situated, practice-based approach to learning. As stated by the Wenger-Trayners (2015): “The ‘body of knowledge’ of a profession is not best understood as a reified curriculum, but rather as a ‘landscape of practice’ consisting of a complex system of communities of practice and the boundaries between them” (p. 14). Interested in how the TIP navigates the various communities of practice, boundaries, and power dynamics inherent in professional practice, this project is guided by two overarching research questions:

- 1) What is the influence of the MC role on experienced teachers’ professional learning, practice, and well-being?
- 2) How do the WQSB stakeholders perceive the impact of the TIP?

The Dissertation

Like any patchwork quilt, each fabric block in this dissertation can be viewed as a complete individual story—both a whole in itself as well as an essential part of the larger quilt pattern. Each manuscript is unique in terms of its focus, materials, purpose, and publication format. Each block also represents a specific moment in time in the school district and during this research process. When stitched together these blocks capture the story of a school district as it relates to a variety of concepts: mentoring and coaching, teacher induction, professional growth, professional learning networks, teacher well-being, and teacher evaluation. In this sense, the patchwork quilt may best be understood as a gathering of disjointed elements (Deleuze

& Guattari, 1987). However, as Koelsch (2012) argues: “the quilt is not merely a hodgepodge of fabric—it has a specific purpose and context” (p. 824). Guided by its research questions, this patchwork quilt has a clear design, method and structure that is outlined below (see Figure 1).

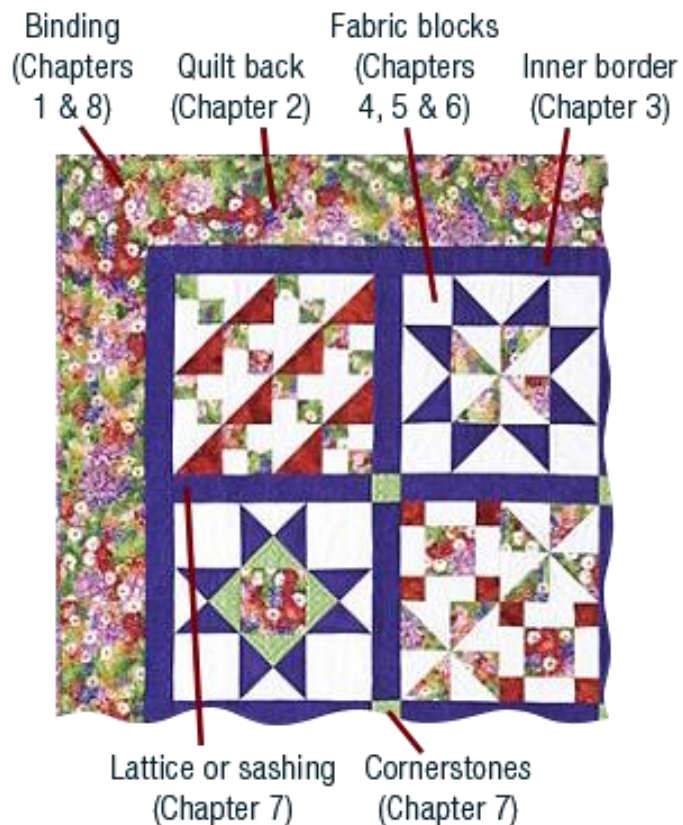


Figure 1: A patchwork quilt*

*Adapted from “Quilting Tips: For Beginners—Anatomy of a Quilt,” by C & T Publishers, 2010 (<https://www.ctpub.com/blog/quilting-tips-for-beginnersanatomy-of-a-quilt/>).

A general overview.

Binding. Chapter One and Chapter Eight of the dissertation bind the edges of this Patchwork quilt. As a quilting primer, Chapter One aims to introduce readers to the quilting metaphor, identify the overall structure of the dissertation, and highlight key design elements.

Chapter Eight, on the other hand, adds the finishing stitches to the quilt. Since this patchwork quilt is comprised of fabric blocks written and published over the span of two years, this chapter outlines some of the key changes that have been made to the WQSB's TIP as a result of this case study project. It also offers next steps and recommendations for future practice and research.

Quilt back. As noted earlier, Chapter Two is the first published manuscript in this dissertation. A solo-authored book chapter in Kutsyuruba and Walker's (2017) edited book, this publication was part of a pan-Canadian perspective on early career teaching written for policy-makers and practitioners. Described as this dissertation's quilt back, this chapter frames the case study context by outlining the WQSB as well as the development, design, and implementation of its TIP. This chapter also provides a preliminary literature review of the case study's key concepts of mentoring, coaching, and teacher induction. Since this book chapter was published in 2017, a more current literature review is also provided in Chapter Seven.

Inner border. Chapter Three represents the dissertation's inner border and describes how the different fabric blocks are framed on the quilt top. It focuses on the research process and aims to outline some of the practicalities, tools and techniques that went into this researcher's qualitative quilting project. In this chapter, I discuss the guiding patchwork quilt metaphor in greater detail, as well as unpack my positionality as a 'pracademic' and examine how this positionality as an academic researching a problem from my world of practice has influenced my overall research process.

Lattice and cornerstones. Chapter Seven is the dissertation's penultimate chapter. Like the lattice or sashing on a patchwork quilt, this chapter frames each fabric block and responds to the research project's two guiding questions. It aims to pull the different quilt parts together and provides a big picture overview of the TIP from the school district's various stakeholders.

Anchored in the research project’s theoretical framework—Wenger-Trayner et al’s (2015) ‘landscapes of practice’—this chapter traces the overall quilt top pattern and connect the threads between each published manuscript. The study’s findings are discussed with and against key empirical, professional, and theoretical literature in order to highlight the quilt’s five cornerstone themes. Strengths and limitations of the research project are also discussed.

Table 1:

Chapter/ Manuscript	Title/ Citation	Summary
Chapter 1 (Binding)	Introduction: A Quilting Primer	This chapter provides a general overview of the dissertation’s structure as a patchwork quilt.
Chapter 2/ Manuscript 1 (Quilt back)	Hollweck, T. (2017). Threading the needle: Examining the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) in the Western Québec School Board. In Kutsyuruba, B, Walker, K., (Eds.), <i>The Bliss and Blisters of Early Career Teaching: A Pan-Canadian Perspective</i> , (pp. 205-226). Burlington, Canada: Word & Deed Publishing Inc. ISBN 978-0-9918626-9-6	This chapter outlines the case study context (the WQSB and the TIP), and provides a preliminary literature review of mentoring, coaching, and teacher induction.
Chapter 3 (Inner border)	A Quilter’s Tale: A pracademic explores qualitative case study research	This chapter focuses on the research project and highlights the researcher’s epistemology, pracademic positionality, and research process (methodology, theoretical and conceptual frameworks and methods).
Chapter 7 (Lattice and cornerstones)	Connected Threads: Examining the quilt frame and the cornerstone themes	This chapter responds to the study’s two guiding research questions. It summarizes each of the published manuscripts and

		highlights the five cornerstone themes.
Chapter 8 (Binding)	Conclusion: The finishing stitches	This chapter highlights recent changes made to the WQSB’s TIP and makes recommendations for future research and practice.

Fabric blocks. Chapters Four, Five and Six are the published articles in this dissertation (Manuscripts Two, Three, and Four). Each fabric block focuses on one of the three foundational pillars in the WQSB’s TIP: Professional Learning (PL), the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF), Teacher Evaluation (see figure 2).

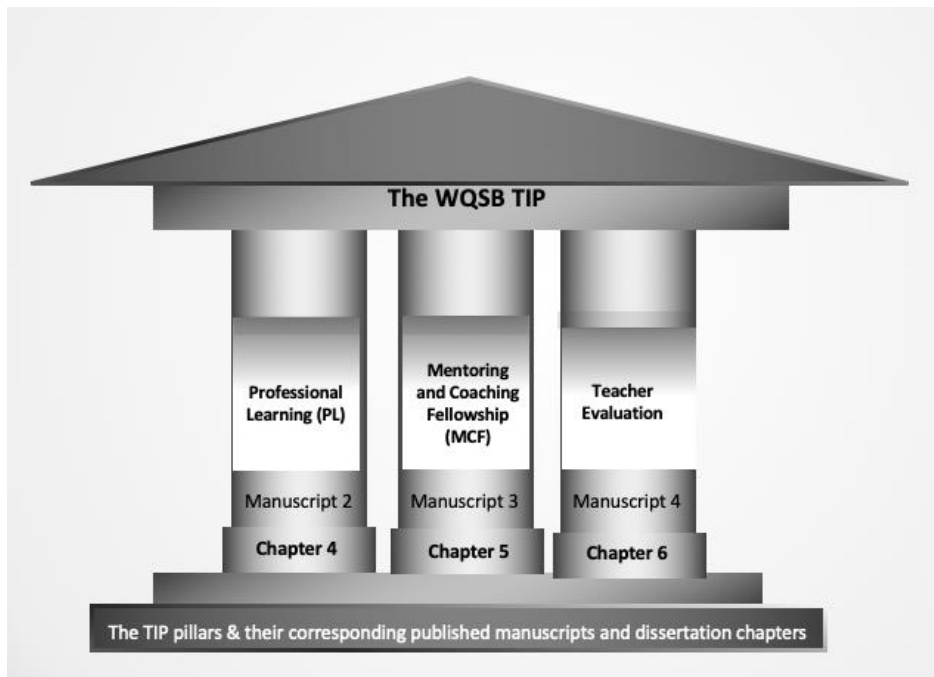


Figure 2: TIP pillars with their corresponding chapters and manuscripts

It is important to note that each manuscript represents ideas and learning from different stages of the research project and responds to one of the project’s two guiding research questions.

Primarily interested in the lived experience of the WQSB MCs, Chapters Four and Five examine the influence of the TIP on MC’s professional learning, practice, and well-being. Chapter Six

focuses on the second research question and examines how TIP’s most contentious pillar—its high-stakes teacher evaluation process—is perceived by various district stakeholders.

Table 2: Manuscripts and their corresponding research question

<p>Manuscript /Chapter</p> <p>TIP pillar</p>	<p>Citation</p>	<p>Research Question</p>
<p>Manuscript 2/ Chapter 4</p> <p>Professional Learning (PL)</p>	<p>Hollweck, T. (Forthcoming). Growing the Top: A case study examining a Mentor–Coach Professional Learning Network In L. Schnellert (Ed.), <i>Professional Learning Networks: Facilitating Educational Transformation (Emerald Professional Learning Networks Series)</i>, Emerald Publishing Limited, Bingley, UK. DOI: 10.1108/eplns</p>	<p>What is the influence of the TIP on MC’s professional learning and practice?</p>
<p>Manuscript 3/ Chapter 5</p> <p>The Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF)</p>	<p>Hollweck, T. (in print). “I love this stuff!”: A Canadian case study of mentor–coach well-being. <i>International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education (IJMCE)</i>, DOI: IJMCE-02-2019-0036</p>	<p>What is the influence of the TIP on MC’s well-being?</p>
<p>Manuscript 4/ Chapter 6</p> <p>Teacher Evaluation</p>	<p>Hollweck, T., Curry, A., Smith, K., Dubeau, M., & Kharyati, T. (2019). Prizes and Imperfections: Examining Teacher Evaluation Within an Induction Program in Western Québec. In <i>Differentiated Teacher Evaluation and Professional Learning</i> (pp. 59-81). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.</p>	<p>How do the WQSB stakeholders perceive the impact of the TIP?</p>

Finally, each fabric block takes a different publication format: a solo-authored book chapter for practitioners and policy-makers (Manuscript Two); a solo-authored peer reviewed scholarly journal article (Manuscript Three), and a co-authored book chapter intended for researchers, practitioners and policy-makers (Manuscript Four). Many of these strategic publication decisions can be traced to my positionality as a pracademic, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. As a dynamic and iterative inquiry process, these pieces not only build on and inform each other, but the ideas captured within these printed pages continue to evolve and develop beyond this finished quilt.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter Two (Manuscript 1): Threading the Needle: Examining the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship of the Western Québec School Board.

Best described as the quilt back, this chapter provides an in-depth description of the WQSB context as well as the development, design and implementation of the WQSB's Teacher Induction Program (TIP). As noted by Koelsch (2012), although a quilt and its fabric blocks can certainly be appreciated on their own, they are both better understood by knowing the socio-historical conditions that surround their creation. Published in Kutsyuruba and Walker's (2017) edited book, *The Bliss and Blisters of Early Career Teaching: A Pan-Canadian Perspective*, this chapter was the result of my participation as an 'expert panelist' in the 2016 Teacher Induction and Mentoring Forum hosted by Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. The Forum provided an engaging and meaningful space for Canadian practitioners and academics to come together to share their thinking and best practices in the work of supporting early career teachers. Seventy

representatives from eight provinces attended the Forum to learn with and from each other. Building on my presentation, this chapter provides a preliminary literature review, and unpacks how mentoring, coaching, and teacher induction are defined in the Western Québec School Board. It is important to note that this chapter is the only one in the edited book that references ‘coaching’ in relation to early career teacher support in Canada. With both mentoring and coaching considered integral to effective teacher induction, this chapter addresses the gap in the literature and offers the first published record of how these terms have been conceptualized as distinct yet interconnected components (see Hollweck, 2017, p. 218). Developing a common understanding of the key terminology of mentoring and coaching has been critical to both the research process and in the TIP. Understanding and visualizing mentoring and coaching as iterative and dynamic elements on a continuum (Bloom et al, 2005; Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran, 2018) has been adopted in TIP’s professional learning and documentation, such as the TIP Handbook (WQSB, 2018b). I have also produced two videos that support this conceptualization (see <https://www.teachingwithteachers.com/videos>).

Chapter Three: A Quilter’s Tale: A pracademic’s exploration of qualitative case study research.

This chapter is the quilt’s inner border and methodology section. As noted by Pellman and Pellman (1984), “[a]n encounter with a quilt is incomplete if it does not include some understanding of the people who made it” (p.6). As such, this chapter outlines my quilting process and how I conceptualize what it means to be a ‘pracademic’ doing qualitative case study research. It also highlights how a pragmatic social constructivist epistemology influenced the quilt’s purpose, case study design (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2014), abductive analysis strategy (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014), the Framework Method (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994)

structure, and study findings. Ultimately, this chapter aims to help the reader better understand the influences, decisions, and tensions embedded in the quilt design. For Lincoln and Guba (1985), the success and quality of any qualitative research project lies in its credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexive audit trail. Tracy (2010) also offers eight universal yet flexible criteria: worthy topics, rigour, sincerity, credibility, a contribution to social understanding, resonance, ethics, and meaningful coherence. These criteria along with the work of Creswell (2013) and Ritchie and Lewis (2003) greatly inform this qualitative research project. In the end, I believe that the quality and uniqueness of this patchwork quilt lies in its design, materials, and construction, which all depend on the skills and decision-making of its qualitative researcher outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Four (Manuscript 2): Growing the Top: A case study examining a Mentor–Coach Professional Learning Network.

This fabric block examines the first of the TIP’s pillars, Professional Learning (PL). The manuscript is a solo-authored chapter that will be published in Schnellert’s (forthcoming) edited book *Professional Learning Networks: Facilitating Educational Transformation*. This book is the most recent contribution to Brown and Poortman’s (Eds.) Emerald Professional Learning Networks Book series. Specifically, this chapter reports on the MC Professional Learning Network (MC PLN) that has been established in the WQSB to support experienced teachers with their MC role. Similar to a quilting guild or quilting bee where quilters work individually and together piecing patchwork into quilts, MCs come together as a formal network to meet, collaborate and focus on improving mentoring and coaching in their schools and throughout the school district. International educational researchers have shown that effective mentoring and coaching programs can support new teacher professional growth, increase teacher retention, and

improve student achievement (Campbell et al, 2016; Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Fundamental to this success is the selection, professional learning, and support of the experienced teachers who take on the MC role. In the WQSB, MCs meet as a learning community to inquire into their own practice and develop the essential skills that help them navigate the interconnected yet distinct mentoring and coaching stances (Brown & Poortman, 2018; Schnellert, Fisher & Sanford, 2018; Knight, 2007; van Nieuwerburgh, 2017).

This chapter outlines the design and delivery of the MC PLN and defines key PLN terminology such as professional learning and development (PLD) (Fullan and Hargreaves, 2016). Findings were generated from data collected from MC questionnaires, interviews and focus groups that were abductively analysed (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014) against Brown and Poortman's (2018) five supporting conditions for effective PLNs: focus, collaboration, reflective professional inquiry, leadership, and group and individual learning. Findings show that in the WQSB, the MC PLN offers powerful support for MCs through its focus on effective classroom practice, structured goal-setting and reflection, ongoing professional learning and development on mentoring and coaching, leadership opportunities, and enhanced collaborative professionalism and collective efficacy. Since its introduction in 2009, the MC PLN is perceived by participants to be a critical component of the MCF. However, this study also found a need for renewed attention to its intent, design and structure to meet the varied skill level and experience of MC members. Ultimately, this chapter was written for practitioners and policy-makers engaged in the design and implementation of PLNs and for school systems that seek to improve the overall teaching and learning in a district by 'growing the top.'

Chapter Five (Manuscript 3): “I love this stuff!”: A Canadian case study of mentor-coach well-being.

This chapter examines TIP’s second pillar, the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF). Accepted as part of a special issue on mentoring and coaching as supportive structures for teacher well-being for the *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education (IJMCE)*, this manuscript reports on the potential benefits, challenges, and implications of the MC role as a supportive structure for experienced teachers’ well-being capacity. Specifically, it adds to the conversation by focusing on the potential benefits the MC role can offer experienced teachers (Cullingford, 2006; Ganser, 2006; Moir & Bloom, 2003; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). In this chapter, data collected from the MC questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and MC focus group were coded and analyzed abductively with and against Seligman’s (2011) well-being framework. For Seligman (2011) there are five contributing well-being elements that together form the acronym PERMA and were used as a priori themes in this study: positive emotion, engagement, (positive) relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. In order to ensure an alternative stakeholder perspective was also included in the data, a focus group with executives from the Western Québec Teachers’ Association (WQTA) was included during the analysis phase. Using the constituting elements of Seligman’s PERMA framework, findings from this study show the MC role supported experienced teachers’ well-being. However, rather than view the MC role as a panacea for educator well-being, the study also showed the importance of the quality and effectiveness of the mentoring and coaching relationship. In particular, whereas positive MCF experiences supported MC well-being, negative experiences were also shown to add to experienced teacher’s workload and caused emotional distress. This study contributes to

the current lack of empirical research on the MC experience and considers some of the wider contextual factors that impact effective mentoring and coaching programs for educators.

Chapter Six (Manuscript 4): Prizes and imperfections: Examining teacher evaluation within an induction context.

This chapter examines the TIP's third pillar, teacher evaluation. Intended for researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers, the manuscript was published as a co-authored chapter in Derrington and Brandon's (2019) edited book *Differentiated Teacher Evaluation and Professional Learning: Policies and Practices for Promoting Career Growth*. Using data collected from various stakeholders (the TIP Team, administrators, MCs, teaching fellows, and the WQTA executive), the chapter highlights the strengths and tensions, described as prizes and imperfections, that emerge in an evaluation system trying to balance supporting new teacher professional growth through formative processes with quality assurance through high-stakes summative evaluation. With teacher evaluation the most contentious pillar in the TIP, the strategic decision was made to co-author this chapter with key WQSB stakeholders: The Director General, Director of Human Resources, and the TIP co-coordinators. The intent behind this book chapter was to provide district leaders with a platform to dialogue around high-stakes systemic teacher evaluation in order to inform future policy and protocols. Since there are currently no provincially mandated teacher evaluation policies in Québec, this study adds empirical understanding to one district's approach to developing, supporting and retaining high-quality teachers through a rigorous teacher induction program. Its findings will not only be useful to develop and refine more powerful evaluation practices within the WQSB, but also in countries and regions with autonomy to design teacher evaluation systems.

Chapter Seven: Connected threads: Examining the quilt frame and the cornerstone themes.

The penultimate chapter in this patchwork quilt provides a big picture overview of the TIP from a variety of stakeholder perspectives (TIP Team, administrators, MCs, teaching fellows, and WQTA executive). Responding directly to the research project's two guiding questions, this chapter discusses the overall findings of the case study. It also pieces together the different fabric blocks and connects the study's empirical data with its framing theoretical and conceptual literature. Key components of Wenger-Trayner et al's (2015) social learning theory of 'landscapes of practice' frame the abductive analysis of data collected from district documentation, questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews. Findings from the study show that whilst the TIP has contributed to many positive and transformational changes in the district, enduring tensions and issues emerge around the cornerstone themes of clarity, adaptability, relationships, trust, and power. With data from the district indicating that over 70% of WQSB teachers, consultants and administrators have been involved in the TIP since its mandatory implementation in 2009, this chapter raises important considerations for future policies and protocols.

Conclusion

A quilt brings together beauty and practicality, as well as history, community, and culture (Sherertz, 1995). Quilting also requires skill and a great deal of patience. In the end, this patchwork quilt is a WQSB community textile. Through its diverse fabric blocks connections are made to the past, present, and future (Ferrier, 2007). As the connecting threads in this dissertation stitch the patches and blocks together, a larger quilt top pattern unfolds. Like a

puzzle, as each piece is read a larger picture comes into view that reveals the experience of one English language school district in Western Québec engaged in systemic teacher induction, mentoring, and coaching.

Ultimately, the art of quilt making is about personal expression. Any finished patchwork quilt is always unique, imperfect, and a culmination of its creator's time, effort, and true love of the craft (Johnson, 2013). This patchwork quilt has captured my heart and is offered as a gift to my beloved school district and the excellent teachers I have had a chance to learn with and from over the past two decades. For those who know me well, know I dwell in a space of hope; it is my hope that every student in every classroom in every school has a chance to experience excellent and inspiring teachers and teaching. At the end of this research project, I truly believe mentoring and coaching embedded into teacher induction has the power to make this happen. So, as I put the finishing touches on this patchwork quilt, I reminded of the message of Marilyn Waniek's (1985) poem "The Century Quilt," that shows it is the claiming and reading of a quilt that can deepen positive ties to the past and strengthen one's belief in the future (Bower, 1994). Certainly, through this quilting project I have had the unique opportunity to not only connect with my past work as a practitioner, but also to build on the work of many respected scholars and quilt my own research story as an academic. Also, through this quilting project, my resolve has been strengthened to continue to find systemic ways to improve teaching and learning through meaningful professional learning and development for teachers. In these final stitches I return to the opening quote I used from Cassandra Ellis's (2012) book *Quilt Love* (p.6):

This is a drawing together of threads,

A piecing together of the past and the future,

A time to stop and consider where you've been,

where you're heading.

For this opportunity to stop and reflect on my work as a pracademic I am deeply grateful. I hope you enjoy reading this thesis as much as I have enjoyed quilting it.

Chapter 2—Manuscript 1: The Quilt Back

Hollweck, T. (2017) Threading the needle: Examining the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) in the Western Québec School Board. In Kutsyruba, B, Walker, K., (Eds.), *The Bliss and Blisters of Early Career Teaching: A Pan-Canadian Perspective*, (pp. 205-226). Burlington, Canada: Word & Deed Publishing Inc. ISBN 978-0-9918626-9-6

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Abstract

This chapter outlines the context and composition of the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) in the Western Québec School Board. Conceptualized as a patchwork quilt, TIP's three key pillars of professional learning (PL), a Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF), and teacher evaluation are discussed against international mentoring, coaching, and induction research literature. Importantly, this chapter defines and visually depicts mentoring and coaching as distinct, yet complementary, approaches in effective induction programs. Now in its eight year, the TIP remains an unfinished project, but an exciting pattern is beginning to emerge, with some lessons learned that may be useful to other Canadian districts interested in mentoring, coaching, and induction programs.

Threading the Needle: Examining the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) in the Western Québec School Board

Threading the needle (Verb, present participle): (idiomatic) to find harmony or strike a balance between conflicting forces, interests, etc. Normally used to indicate the difficulty of doing so; also, sarcastically, for a failed attempt.

(Wiktionary.org)

International educational research has shown that high quality mentoring and induction for beginning teachers can enhance development and retention of highly effective teachers and increase student success (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1996; Fletcher, Strong & Villar, 2008; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wang, Odell & Schville, 2008). Although the terms *mentoring* and *induction* are often used interchangeably in the literature, it is important to note that “conceptually, mentoring is but one component, albeit usually the most important element, of a program of planned induction” (Bullough, 2012, p. 62). Mentoring and induction have grown internationally in popularity as a means to support teachers; yet programs vary greatly in terms of effectiveness (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Ganser, 2006).

Adding to the confusion, coaching is also gaining traction in education as an effective approach to enhance teachers’ professional growth. Also, often used interchangeably with the term mentoring or viewed as a component of mentoring, coaching remains ill-defined and programs vary greatly. In this chapter, mentoring and coaching are viewed as different, yet complementary, approaches that form a critical part of teacher induction. Specifically, the chapter reports on Western Québec School Board’s (WQSB) Teacher Induction Program (TIP), a program that aims to support teachers in their first two years of employment. With no clear pattern guiding the development and implementation of mentoring, coaching and induction

programs in Canada or Québec, TIP was developed at the grassroots level and is inextricably linked to its context, a small English school district in Western Québec.

WQSB's TIP is best conceptualized as a patchwork quilt. Quilting is a needlework technique that involves two or more layers of fabric—called the quilt back and top—that sandwich padding of some sort and are stitched together in a decorative pattern (<http://www.quilthistory.com>). Among the types of quilts, the patchwork quilt is the most utilitarian. Designed to keep its user warm and supported, the quilter uses a variety of pieces of fabric that are already in their possession to form fabric blocks which are then sewn together in a pattern of some kind. Much like a patchwork quilt, WQSB's TIP was developed to support teachers who are new to the district. Whereas the district's context forms the quilt back, the numerous influences, initiatives, commitments, and district partners make up the fabric blocks that need to be sewn together in the quilt top. Without a clear model for induction in the district, feedback from key stakeholders (administrators, union representatives, mentor-coaches, consultants, directors and teaching fellows) must also be stitched into the quilt to avoid its early unravelling. Now in its seventh year, an emerging and exciting pattern is beginning to take shape in the TIP quilt, which may have important implications for other Canadian districts exploring mentoring, coaching, and induction.

The Quilt Back: the WQSB context

The Western Québec School Board (WQSB) is located in Gatineau, Québec and is a member of the provincial English School Network. It provides English language education to students in the Outaouais, Pontiac and Abitibi-Temiscamingue regions. Although it is a relatively small school board in staff (450) and students (6655), it has the largest geographic catchment in

Québec and services a disparate area roughly twice the size of Nova Scotia. The WQSB is comprised of both urban and rural schools and has a unique composition of student population in terms of language and culture, especially in its northern schools. Historically, there has been a problem with teacher attrition, due in part to: 1) the geographical proximity of the school board to Ontario schools where teachers receive a significant pay increase; and, 2) the challenging conditions of teaching in small rural, and often northern, schools. In recent years, there has been an increase in teachers applying for work in the WQSB. This is likely a result of more full-time teaching opportunities being offered in a growing district at a time when there is a shortage in the neighboring province of Ontario and new regulations imposed from the Ontario Ministry of Education¹. With many more teachers looking for long-term teaching appointments in the district, the WQSB recognized the need to develop an induction program that would support its new teachers and help retain *highly effective* teachers in all of its schools. Three clear aims frame the development and implementation of WQSB's TIP, previously called the New Teacher Program (NTP). These aims are: 1) to retain effective teachers new to the district; 2) to provide leadership and professional growth opportunities for veteran staff; and, 3) to improve teaching

¹ Regulation 274/12 first introduced in fall 2012 mandated standardized hiring procedures and defined a pathway to permanent employment that usually requires new teachers to start on daily supply rosters and short-term occasional teaching before gaining eligibility to apply for longer-term occasional assignments, and eventually to compete for permanent employment opportunities with a school board.

and learning across the district. It is these three aims, along the context of the WQSB, that form the quilt back onto which the TIP pattern is stitched.

The Quilt Top: The TIP

No two patchwork quilts are ever alike. Not only is this uniqueness a result of the variety of fabric pieces available to individual quilters, but these pieces or units can also be sewn together in hundreds, if not thousands of different ways to create the quilt top. Like a patchwork quilt, induction programs differ from district to district. Much depends on the creativity and skill of the quilters or the program developers. In the WQSB, the development of TIP began with a small volunteer committee of consultants, administrators, and teachers led by Michel Dubeau, the Director of Education responsible for the new teacher dossier. The committee was tasked with stitching a variety of pieces together into a coherent pattern. Lacking skill and expertise in induction, mentoring and coaching, the committee started by exploring available models in the province, country and even internationally to help guide them with their quilting process.

Mentoring and induction in Québec.

Although the Gouvernement du Québec's (2016) *Education Act* (Section 22, paragraph 6.1) stipulates clearly that teachers must "collaborate in the training of future teachers and in the mentoring of newly qualified teachers," what this actually looks like in practice is ultimately left to each individual school district. Unlike some other provinces, Québec has no self-regulatory body that licenses and governs the teaching profession, such as Ontario's College of Teachers. Hence, it is the responsibility of individual school boards to develop, deliver and fund ongoing professional learning for its members, which includes new teacher induction. As noted in the pan-Canadian document analysis study of induction and mentorship programs (Kutsyuruba,

Godden, & Tregunna, 2013), there have been some attempts by the Ministry of Education (MELS) to provide guidance around these processes to the districts. The authors referred to a document produced in March of 2009 that examined the role of mentoring and share its eight recommendations:

That MELS provide money to be dedicated to organized mentoring activities; that MELS, school boards, and universities collaborate to develop organized mentoring programs based on the available research and tailored to suit local needs; that mentoring should be a required activity for all first year teachers and an option for all second-year teachers; that school boards and schools develop strategies to train mentors; that an administrator or in-school committee assign mentors to new teachers as an initial step, and that new teachers later choose their own mentors; that mentors be given release time to receive training and to meet mentees; that when there are not enough active teachers to serve as mentors, school boards hire local retired teachers on a part-time basis to support new teachers; and that existing projects to train mentors be networked and supported by MELS funding, in order to deliver mentoring programs effectively and efficiently. (pp. 37-38)

To date, there has been little Ministerial funding available and few supported networking opportunities within the English education community. As a result, there is great disparity among the approaches to induction and mentoring across the various school boards. Adding to this, there is no established provincial forum to share best practices, and it is also extremely difficult to navigate district and provincial documentation to better understand the different program offerings (Kutsyuruba et al., 2013). In fact, although the WQSB's TIP is one of the more robust

and structured induction and mentoring programs in the province's English sector, it was left out of the report due to a lack of publicly accessible documentation.

In recent years, positive steps are being taken to address some of these challenges. First, Ministerial funding has been earmarked for districts to support the mentoring of new teachers. Second, there have been attempts by various groups to convene English school boards around the issue of mentorship and induction, such as the Leadership Committee for English Education in Québec's (LCEEQ) Mentorship Project for New Teachers (2012-2013), the Québec Provincial Association of Teachers' (QPAT) New Teacher Committee (2011) and the Directors of English Education Network's (DEEN) learning partnerships (2014). Although moving in the right direction, there still remains a large variance in the type and structure of induction and mentoring programs offered throughout Québec, challenges with accessing and sharing best practices, and very little interaction and networking amongst and between the English and French education communities.

The development of the QCSB's Teacher Induction Program (TIP).

In quilting, there are special techniques used to sew patchwork pieces into blocks and a variety of block patterns (such as four patch, nine patch, and rail fence) to choose from when assembling the quilt top. As noted by Liz Johnson (2013), "the precise execution of these techniques is paramount to a beautifully finished quilt. It's similar to putting together a puzzle; each piece has to fit perfectly in order for the larger picture to come into view." Similarly, for the TIP development team, there were many competing initiatives, visions, and influences that needed to be stitched together skillfully to keep the final TIP quilt from unravelling. As new quilters, the team turned to research and established mentoring and induction programs for guidance. Championing the importance of induction, Feiman-Nemser (2012) outlined several

key components for effective programs: individualized professional development focusing on an orientation to school and community, instructional strategies and curricular guidance; reduced workload; serious mentoring for at least two years which includes sanctioned time, initial training, ongoing development and appropriate matches; and administrative support (p. 15).

Without any readily available induction programs designed specifically for the Québec context, the WQSB purchased the Virginia-based *Mentoring in the 21st Century* (Rutherford, 2005) resource kit. The kit provided a comprehensive mentor training plan with all the required tools, such as session outlines, learning exercises, mentor handbooks, participant manuals, DVDs and posters. With only a few schools involved in its pilot year (2009), the TIP team strictly followed the kit's training plan. Administrators selected veteran teachers to attend a 2-day training session offered during the summer and each newly minted mentor left with two giant binders full of mentoring resources. Despite the American context, the induction team found the resource kit useful. However, feedback from participating mentors revealed the sheer bulk of resources was overwhelming and often sat unused. It was clear that a more structured and context-specific program was needed. As well, it was evident that relying purely on the good-will of the TIP development committee and veteran teachers as volunteers would ultimately make the induction program unsustainable. In 2010, a part-time (30%) school board consultant position was created to help with program development, coordination and delivery. As the number of teachers new to the district grew, by 2012 a full-time (100%) position was established.

At the same time that the induction and mentoring program was being developed in the WQSB, a long-standing learning partnership with Ravenswood School in Bromley, England and OLEVI, the International Centre for Teaching and Learning, was looking at evaluation and supervision practices. WQSB directors, administrators, and veteran teachers were paired with

counterparts from Ravenswood School and OLEVI to explore what ‘high quality’ teaching looked like in the Western Québec context. From this learning partnership, an influential evaluation document and teaching observation tool (the Professional Rubric for the Observation of Teaching Tool) was produced. Both are foundational documents in the evaluation and supervision of WQSB teachers. Framed around the 12 *Core Professional Competencies for the Teaching Profession* (MELS, 2001), these ‘living’ documents continue to be updated as new understanding around evaluation and supervision practice occurs. As a result of these learning partnerships, the evaluation and supervision of teachers became a large part of the fabric of the district and would need to be sewn into the TIP quilt. Another important fabric piece that added to the TIP quilt came from an LCEEQ grant for the induction team and a few veteran teachers to examine Ontario’s New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) and meet some of its leaders. The learning from this experience added a renewed focus on professional learning for new teachers, mentor-training and the need to develop context-specific resources.

An Emerging Pattern

Starting in 2010, in order to be placed on the ‘priority of employment’ list and be eligible for tenure, all teachers new to the district (regardless of previous teaching experience) must complete the TIP’s two-year commitment. Over the years, feedback from key stakeholders had informed the program’s development and implementation. Although it remains a living and responsive program, an emerging pattern is taking shape as the program structure and terminology is clarified. First, the program’s name was changed from the *New Teacher Program* to the *Teacher Induction Program* (TIP) and ‘new teachers’ became *teaching fellows* in recognition of the important role a mentoring and coaching fellowship plays in teacher induction.

Finding the right terminology has been a challenge and these name changes were responses to stakeholder feedback that not all TIP participants were ‘new’ to the teaching profession and that to be labelled as such could be off-putting and could hinder the program’s focus on professional learning through a fellowship approach. As well, mentors became *mentor-coaches*, reflecting the district’s use of the distinct but complementary approaches. Finally, TIP’s structure was defined as having three key pillars: Professional Growth, the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF), and Evaluation (see Figure 1). Each of these pillars are described below.



Figure 3: The three pillars of the WQSB’s TIP

Pillar 1: Professional Learning (Previously called Professional Growth).

Whereas professional learning expands beyond district borders, this pillar recognizes that continued learning on the job with colleagues is essential for the improvement of a school district (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). TIP provides one day of orientation for teaching fellows in year one and six optional Professional Learning (PL) opportunities in year two. The workshop-style PL is offered by district consultants and veteran teachers (mostly Mentor-coaches) and focuses

on curricular guidance and/or important board initiatives, frameworks or approaches (such as Tribes, Sound Prints, the Daily Five, Visible Learning, Indigenous Pedagogy, Universal Design for Learning). The opportunity to lead the PL workshops offers veteran teachers a shared sense of purpose and direction, new leadership roles, and emphasizes the importance of sharing best practice and ‘growing the top,’ a key aim of TIP. Mentor–coaches are also provided with two PL sessions, usually facilitated by the TIP consultants and/or mentoring and coaching specialists. teaching fellows and mentor–coaches are also encouraged to engage in PL through school, district and ministry initiatives, as well as beyond the provincial borders. Ultimately, the goal of this pillar is to offer current professional learning opportunities and provide a structure for teachers to share their experiences and build relationships.

Pillar 2: The Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF).

The Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF) pillar is both the most research-driven and the most expensive component of WQSB’s TIP. The MCF emerged from the district’s belief that there needed to be opportunities for teaching fellows to reflect, collaborate and practice new learning in their own environment with support from their colleagues (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, Joyce & Showers, 2002). As part of the MCF, every teaching fellow is paired with a non-evaluative, administrator-selected mentor–coach in their first year of TIP. As highlighted in the literature (Feiman-Nemser, 2012), the most ideal match for the mentor–coach would be someone from the same school, same grade and same subject area. However, considering the context of the WQSB, there are often times when only some or even none of these criteria are possible and a distance mentor–coach is assigned. Although a large body of literature highlights the importance of self-selection and choice in mentoring and coaching practice (Van Nieuwerburgh, 2012; Moir & Bloom, 2003; Sharpe & Nishimura, 2017), it has

also been shown that the practice can also be highly diverse and inconsistent (Kyriacou & O'Connor, 2003; Totterdell et al., 2002) and may actually support ineffective practice rather than promote more effective teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). In response, the WQSB chose a mandated and systematic approach to coaching and mentoring, with an aim towards consistency and equal opportunity for all teachers new to the district. As key stakeholders in the induction process, administrators are responsible for selectively recruiting teachers to serve as mentor-coaches. Ideally, these veteran teachers are carefully selected for their instructional and leadership skills, as well as for 'fit' in terms of workload, interest, personality and position in the school community. In the last seven years, more than 45 teachers have been trained as mentor-coaches, and they have worked with more than 250 teaching fellows. Feedback from teaching fellows, mentor-coaches and administrators consistently note the MCF as the most important component of TIP and credit effective fellowships for professional growth and improved teaching and learning. With nearly half of WQSB's 450 teachers involved in the MCF in some capacity since 2009, it has the potential, if done well, to greatly impact the culture of the district.

In the MCF, each mentor-coach and teaching fellow pair, or fellowship, is expected to observe each other in practice, meet regularly (weekly or per cycle) to set goals, and reflect on professional growth. Two TIP-funded release *Fellowship Days* for shared professional learning are also provided. These days are based on the fellowship needs and interests and are often used to do observations of other classrooms in the district. Classroom visits are not only rich learning opportunities for the fellowship, but they also help to build relationships within and across schools, celebrate effective teaching and learning, and help to capture the knowledge within the district.

It is evident from the research literature that the type of structure, selection methods, as well as training and support for mentor–coaches, are paramount to an effective mentoring and coaching program (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Along with two PL sessions, mentor–coaches in the WQSB are provided with individual support from the TIP team and multiple resources, such as a TIP handbook. Since 2010, professional learning sessions have provided mentor–coaches with a venue to share experiences, and have focused on how to provide meaning feedback through classroom observations (Jackson, 2013), how to have hard conversations (Abrams, 2009), and how to use the GROW model (Whitmore, 2010) in coaching sessions. A recent focus of the MCF has been on defining mentoring and coaching and clarifying what each approach entails. Mentor–coaches are required to set goals based on the six mentoring and coaching competencies developed in-house through the MCF. Each term, they submit a written reflection to the TIP team around these goals and their own professional learning. In exchange for the heavy workload, mentor–coaches are paid a small stipend of one thousand dollars that can be redeemed as income (taxable), days off, or put towards technology.

Quilting Primer: Learn the Lingo. Along with the recent and well-received name changes (TIP, mentor–coach, and teaching fellow), work has been done by the TIP team to unpack key terminology such as mentoring and coaching. This has proven to be a challenging task as the terms have conflicting interpretations and usage within the educational and research communities (CUREE, 2005; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Knight, 2007; Moir & Bloom, 2003; Sharpe & Nishmura 2017). Often, the terms mentoring and coaching are used interchangeably, or coaching is described as a component of mentoring or vice versa. Although there have been recent attempts in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom to clarify the key differences, there remains work to be done for the Canadian context. In the WQSB, mentoring

and coaching are viewed as distinct, yet complementary, approaches in an effective induction process. Much depends on the fellowship needs and it requires skill on behalf of the mentor–coach to know when to use a mentoring or coaching stance. Understanding the terminology is an important first step to help mentor–coaches in their dance along the hyphen.

Mentoring. The concept of mentoring can be traced back to Ancient Greece and Homer’s “Odyssey” where Mentor was a friend of Odysseus and adviser of Telemachus. This reference conjures up the image of a more knowledgeable and experienced individual taking up a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced individual (Ganser, 2006). Mentoring in this context is an informal and voluntary process where the trusted advisor’s role is to facilitate the protégé’s career and personal development. Although informal mentoring continues to have a place in education, research indicates that there was a trend in educational reform in the 1980’s toward the professionalization of the role, which includes systematic training and increased regulation and accreditation, especially in the UK and USA (Moir & Bloom, 2003; Mullen, 2012).

The structured workplace model has greatly shifted the purposes and uses of mentoring. Depending on the context, the research literature (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Mullen, 2012) highlights two main rationales for most mentoring programs. For some programs, the goal of mentoring is to increase teacher retention, and as such, the role of the mentor is to provide emotional guidance and teaching support as new teachers begin to construct a ‘professional identity’ (Gold, 1996) within a school. Wang and Odell (2002) described this socialization aspect of mentoring as the ‘humanistic perspective.’ For other programs, mentoring is viewed as a means to transform teaching and learning in a system. This is a more complex role and the mentor is viewed as being critical in the development of a new teacher’s professional

practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ganser, 2006; Mullen, 2012). Wang and Odell (2002) called this view of mentoring the ‘situated apprenticeship perspective,’ for its focus on the improvement of teaching quality. In the WQSB, both views of mentoring are combined under the three TIP aims of retaining effective teachers, providing leadership opportunities to veteran teachers, and ultimately, improving teaching and learning across the district.

Another debate in the mentoring literature revolves around the issue of whether mentoring should be voluntary or mandated. Voluntary mentoring transpires through informal and spontaneous communication, and mentees often select their own mentors. Proponents for the voluntary approach argue that this type of mentoring has been shown to enhance the development of the whole person (Varney, 2009). However, critics raise questions about the quality of the mentoring experience, and whether a mentee-selected mentor is always the best example of high-quality teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). On the other hand, mandated mentoring assigns and structures mentoring partnerships, and there is an expectation that mentees will make documented gains through the mentoring experience. Those in favour of mandated mentoring note the transformative potential of mentoring and its potential to “recreate” the teaching profession (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). By selecting and training mentors, districts have more control over the type of mentoring that will transpire, ensuring the process is connected to other reform components. Critics of mandated mentoring are concerned that in this approach, mentoring is turned into an achievement measure, which jeopardizes the original spirit and integrity of mentoring (Mullen, 2012). They argue that it makes mentoring feel impersonal and evaluative rather than a process for fostering professional collaboration. Although the WQSB has taken a mandated mentoring position by using administrator-selected Mentor-coaches, the research literature indicates that regardless of the mentoring approach (voluntary or

mandated, informal or formal), an effective mentoring process has the potential to improve professional culture by targeting introspection, as well as open and reciprocal dialogue among colleagues around issues of teaching and learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Coaching. Coaching has long been well established in business and sports. However, it is a relatively recent initiative in the field of education (Fletcher, 2012; Van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). Like mentoring, coaching can be difficult to define, and the practice can be multifaceted, ambiguous, and contextually driven (Fletcher, 2012; Knight, 2007; Mullen, 2012; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). As a millennial educational phenomenon, it is often perceived in the literature to be nearer to the practical than the theoretical and remains scantily researched (Fletcher, 2012). As coaching gains traction, there have been more studies and work published that aim to clarify the coaching process and its impact on teaching and learning (Knight, 2007; Munro, 2016; Starcevich, 2009; Passmore, 2010; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). Although mentoring and coaching share some key principles, such as a focus on professional learning in a trust-based and collaborative relationship, there is general agreement in the literature that coaching is a more structured, less directive, and more short-term process than mentoring. Whereas mentors are generally understood as more senior and skilled professionals who provide advice and share their knowledge and expertise with the person being mentored, or mentee, coaches can be generalists who are trained to ask probing questions in order to enhance reflection and guide inquiry based on the agenda set by the person being coached, or coachee. Coaching has also been described as focusing more on the practice of teaching rather than on personal and professional growth; but this remains debated and seems to depend on how coaching is conceptualized in the literature. Ultimately, coaching in education remains an ill-defined and under-theorized field (Fletcher &

Mullen, 2012; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012) and like mentoring, more research is needed to determine whether properly organized and supported coaching programs are improving learning and teaching in schools.

I have developed a conceptualization of WQSB’s most recent understanding of the two processes and their unique principles (as captured in Figure 2). A Mobius strip is used to show how mentoring and coaching, while distinct approaches, are interconnected and anchored in shared principles in an effective induction program.

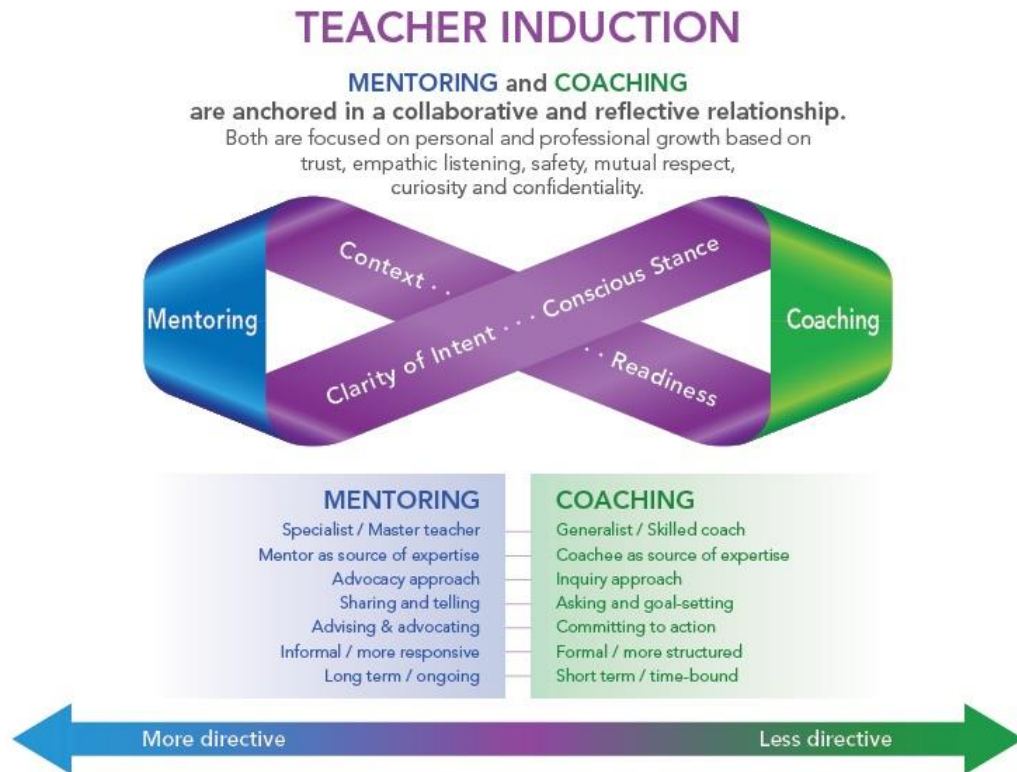


Figure 4: Mentoring and coaching during teacher induction

Returning to the quilt metaphor – just as there are many block patterns to choose from when sewing a patchwork quilt, so there are many different approaches to mentoring and coaching in

education. Since TIP initially began by using the *Mentoring in the 21st Century* model which defined coaching as a component of mentoring, the MCF continues to evolve as various coaching approaches, such as appreciative coaching (Orem et al., 2011), cognitive coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1994), instructional coaching (Knight, 2007), evocative coaching (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2010), and adaptive mentorship (Ralph & Walker, 2011) are explored. Ultimately, as each new piece of learning gets stitched into the MCF, the overall TIP quilt grows.

Pillar 3: Teacher Evaluation.

Evaluation is the most controversial of the TIP components in terms of participant feedback and mentoring and coaching research. This pillar refers to a rigorous two-year high-stakes (job or no job) evaluation process for all teaching fellows in order to make WQSB's 'priority of employment' list and be eligible for tenure. Up until 2016, this process included three formal observations by school administration, one formal observation by the TIP team (see team composition²) and the submission of a Professional Growth Portfolio based on Québec's 12 Professional Competencies (MELS, 2001). Teaching fellows in their second year of TIP are no longer paired with a mentor-coach but must still complete the same high-stakes formal evaluation process. This rigorous evaluation process grew from the WQSB-Ravenswood partnership and is based on the requirements outlined in the MELS information document (2006) that states:

² The TIP team is currently comprised of three members, the director of Human Resources and two consultants responsible for TIP coordination and implementation. The formal observation team may include two of these members who accompanies the administrator(s) and mentor-coach (if agreed upon by the teaching fellow). It is important to note that the mentor-coach is present in a supportive and non-evaluative role.

The principal or director is responsible for evaluating the educational and professional practices of teachers on probation. However, the MELS favours an approach that fosters the active participation of the teacher in question. In this approach, tools for gathering and recording information make it possible to identify, develop and evaluate the different competencies. The teacher concerned, as well as the coordinator for the school board or private or special status institution, must be informed of the results of the evaluation. (p. 16)

Following Québec Ministry guidelines, administrators in the WQSB are responsible for completing an official evaluation document at the end of each year for all Year 1 and 2 teaching fellows. In order to inform their final evaluation, each term, it is expected that they complete formal classroom observations throughout the year using the WQSB-designed *Professional Rubric for the Observation of Teaching Tool* (PRO Teaching Tool) and provide the teaching fellow with meaningful feedback for growth. In one of these term observations, the TIP team and mentor–coach (see footnote 2) join the school administration. There are three aims of the TIP team observation approach: 1) to ensure consistency in the evaluation practices across the district; 2) to provide professional learning opportunities for administrators around classroom observations and meaningful feedback delivery; and ultimately, 3) to provide meaningful feedback to the teaching fellow from an outside perspective. In spite of these aims, key stakeholders (teaching fellows, mentor–coaches and union members) argue that these formal team observations add an unnecessarily stressful high-stakes component to a snapshot (20-30 minute) visit. There is also some confusion around the role of these classroom visits in the final evaluation. To date, the TIP team’s role in formal observations remains hotly debated and divisive in the district.

In order to increase transparency and address some stakeholder concerns, since 2015, the mentor–coach has been invited to participate in the formal observations along with the TIP team, playing a non-evaluative and advocacy role. Including mentor–coaches in the formal evaluation process of their teaching fellow has received mixed reviews in the research literature. The traditional concept of mentoring views the relationship between mentor and mentee as one based on confidence and trust (Carver & Katz, 2004; Fransson, 2010; Piggot-Irvine et al, 2009). From this perspective, mentoring and evaluation remain separate functions. However, an increased focus on improving teacher effectiveness as the rationale for mentoring and coaching programs is leading some districts to include mentors and coaches in formal assessment to varying degrees (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Fransson, 2010; Rippon & Martin, 2006; Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008). Some researchers (e.g., Hobson et al, 2009; Wang & Odell, 2007) argued that including mentor–coaches in the assessment process will jeopardize the supportive and open collaborative partnership that should promote risk-free learning. Others (e.g. Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Rippon & Martin, 2006; Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008) showed that mentor–coaches are able to support as well as assess their new teachers, once a trust relationship has been formed. In fact, Carver and Feiman-Nemser (2009) found that the dual role of assessor and supporter created a “collective sense of professional accountability” (p. 317) among mentor–coaches and teaching fellows. After this second year of mentor–coaches participating in the formal observation of their teaching fellows, stakeholder feedback will make an important contribution to this discussion.

The final component of the two-year evaluation process for teaching fellows has been the yearly completion of a Professional Growth Portfolio submitted to their school administration. Using the 12 Professional Competencies (MELS, 2001) as its framework, teaching fellows were

expected to set term goals, provide evidence of their growth and write reflections. What resulted from WQSB's attempt to make the evaluation process more collaborative, inclusive and "foster active participation" (MELS, 2006) was perceived by many teachers as an added burden or a 'make-work project' in an already challenging job. Critical feedback from stakeholders spurred the WQSB's recent (2016) move toward a *Reflective Record* rather than the Professional Growth Portfolio. The Reflective Record aims to streamline the evaluation process, retain inclusivity, reduce paperwork and make the evaluation experience more meaningful for both the teaching fellow and administration. Each term the teaching fellow is expected to: 1) set two goals with their mentor-coach and administrator; 2) reflect in writing on the impact of these goals on student learning; and 3) provide at least one piece of evidence. Administration is also expected to provide each teaching fellow with written feedback for growth each term based on classroom observations. Recent district and provincial professional learning for administrators has focused on classroom observation strategies and ways to give teachers meaningful feedback. Undoubtedly, feedback from this year's TIP cohort will inform next steps with regards to having the Reflective Record as part of the evaluation process.

Threading the Needle

After seven years, the TIP quilt remains unfinished, but a discernable pattern is starting to emerge. Like all sewing projects, there have been many dropped stitches and loose threads along the way. In particular, four key lessons have been learned that may be useful to other Canadian districts interested in developing mentoring, coaching and induction programs. First, TIP cannot be removed from its context. It was discovered early on that no pre-packaged program could simply be sewn onto the WQSB quilt back. Rather, TIP is a homegrown program made up of a

variety of patchwork blocks, each representing the different partners, influences, initiatives and competing priorities within the district. Second, TIP is a living process. By clarifying key terminology and putting clear structures into place, TIP has been woven into the fabric of the district. However, stakeholder feedback and ongoing professional learning must continue to guide how the patchwork blocks are arranged and rearranged in the quilting process. Third, the importance of effective selection and training of mentor-coaches cannot be understated. With the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF) highlighted as the most important component of TIP, the mentor-coach has a major influence, either positive or negative, on the experience of a teaching fellow. The careful selection and specialized training of mentor-coaches increases the likelihood of an effective fellowship, which can lead to improved teaching and learning throughout the district. More work needs to be done in the WQSB to ensure all mentor-coaches have equal access to high quality systematic mentoring and coaching training, are regularly supported, and have time and space to collaborate and share best practices. Fourth, trust is foundational to TIP's success. Ultimately, all stakeholders must be aware and trust the district's vision for teacher induction. Over the years, the TIP quilt has evolved and changed based on feedback and new learning; however, the program changes are not always clearly communicated, and misunderstandings persist throughout the district. Compounding this issue, mistrust and conflicting views regarding the role of evaluation in teacher induction remains. More effort needs to be done at a district level to make TIP transparent, address concerns and ensure that all stakeholders feel included in the feedback process. As a constant work in progress, WQSB's TIP remains an unfinished project. However, as this chapter shows, a definite pattern is starting to emerge that may offer insight for other Canadian districts working on their own mentoring, coaching and induction quilts.

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Chapter 3—A Quilter’s Tale

*I love the true tradition of **quilting**—making fabric that you have and love into **something** that is both useful and beautiful, using your creative eye and your **choices**.*

Ellis (2012, p. 116)

This qualitative research project emerged from my professional work as a consultant for the Western Québec School Board (WQSB), where I have been responsible for co-developing and co-coordinating its Teacher Induction Program (TIP) since 2008. In my professional life as the TIP coordinator, I became increasingly interested in the professional learning and development of teachers, especially experienced teachers. In particular, I wanted to know why veteran teachers with full-time teaching loads would willingly take on an additional and often time-consuming role as a mentor-coach (MC) in their school. What might they gain personally and professionally from being an MC? Also, interested in systemic change and eager to improve the TIP, I wanted to know how the mandatory program was perceived by various stakeholders across the school district. Ultimately, it was a quest to find answers to these questions that spearheaded my doctoral journey.

Armed with a deep curiosity about what underpinned my professional practice, I was granted a leave of absence from the WQSB during my third maternity leave in 2012 and enrolled

in the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education. As a doctoral student I was motivated to examine the theoretical frameworks that would help me better understand teaching and learning in my workplace. Specifically, I was interested in the role mentoring, coaching, and teacher induction played in supporting teachers' professional learning and development. It was my intention to design a research project that would be not only of interest to me but would also make a difference in my world of practice for students and educators.

As outlined in Chapter 1, I conceptualize this research project as a patchwork quilt. Like quilting, interpretivist research is highly dependent on the artistry and skill of the quilter. There were many decisions made that led to this finished product. As stated by qualitative quilter, Bamford (ND), there is a level of complexity, sensitivity, and a personal response embedded in every project: "To this extent, quilting is ultimately an act of power" (p.10). Since as the project's quilter I am positioned centrally in this finished product, the aim of this chapter is to reveal some of what went on in the background during the making of this patchwork quilt. As stated by Creswell (2014), "[r]esearchers recognize that their own backgrounds shape their interpretation, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural, and historical experiences" (p.8). As such, the chapter begins with an explanation of the patchwork quilt metaphor and is followed by a detailed discussion of the qualitative quilting process.

The Patchwork Quilt Metaphor

Searching the qualitative research literature, I am well aware that I am not the first researcher to conceptualize qualitative research as a quilt (see Ball, H.K, 2008; Bamford, ND; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Ferrier, 2007; Koelsch, 2012; Saukko, 2000; Vaughan, 2005). Quilts'

readerly and writerly qualities have long been featured in women's poetry and prose as well as the work of feminist literary theorists and critics (see Bower, 1994; Learn, 1996; Showalter, 1986; Tornsey & Elsley, 1994). In the introduction to their edited book, Torsney and Elsley (1994) note that in these texts the quilt often appears "as both itself—a covering, a pieced artifact, a family heirloom—and as a representation of something else—class and gender relations, aesthetic theories, readings of democracy—in much current intellectual discourse" (p.6). Essentially, quilts are a compelling metaphor because they carry meaning and import and combine a utilitarian function with artistic beauty.

Quilts are also important historical documents. They hold a special meaning in the history of women throughout the world. In fact, quilted fabric has even been unearthed by archeologists from the ancient societies of Egypt, India, China, and Mesopotamia (Johnson, 2013). In North America, the most popular type of quilt is the patchwork or pieced artform (Kiracofe & Huff, 1993). Although often overlooked, quilts as text(iles) (Elsley, 1996) transmit important information about women and their lives that might not have been readily available through other means (Witzling, 2009). As described by the quilting historian, Ruth Finlay (1929), "[t]here is no antique more expressive of our foremothers than patchwork" (p.32).

During my doctoral studies, I was first inspired to use a patchwork quilt metaphor in my research after viewing the curated collection displayed in the Shelburne Museum in Vermont. From the start, I was captivated by how the quilters (mainly women) were able to make a functional object beautiful. I loved the way they used fabric colours and textures, patterns and design, and intricate stitching and appliques to tell stories, collect images related to their own lives, and to connect to people. It was evident that these quilt-makers not only brought technical skills to their artform, but also embedded cultural influences into their choice of subject and

design. The quilting process also resonated for me as an educator and researcher. In particular, I was intrigued by the power of the quilting ‘bee’ or guild. These guilds were described by Ferrier (2007) as a space where women could gather to learn with and from one another and build a sense of community: “In this private activity away from male eyes, women worked individually and together piecing patchwork and quilting to create an intimate connection to past, present, and future” (p.11). In many communities, patchwork quilting continues to thrive as a tradition. For me, its transformative potential to stitch seemingly disjointed fragments together to make a beautiful whole was adopted as an inspiring metaphor to guide my doctoral project.

The term ‘quilt’ or ‘quilting’ originates from the Latin *culcita*, which means a stuffed sack. As a noun the term ‘quilt’ refers to a 3-layer stitched bedcovering comprised of a quilt top, quilt back and batting. As a verb, the term ‘quilting’ refers to the act of stitching the 3 layers together in a decorative and predetermined pattern or method. Patchwork quilts range from simple and functional to sophisticated and artistic. The ‘patchwork’ or ‘pieced’ qualifier refers to how different fabric pieces or units are stitched together into blocks and then pieced together in a specific order or pattern to create the quilt top. Like a quilt, each published manuscript in this dissertation represents a different fabric block that stitches together data pieces with the professional and theoretical literature. Once sewn together, a pattern emerges that tells a story about the WQSB in relation to the concepts of teacher induction, mentoring and coaching, professional learning networks, teacher well-being, and teacher evaluation. The quilt’s theoretical framework, the social learning theory of ‘landscapes of practice’ (Wenger-Trayner et al, 2015), is threaded into the research project’s overall design.

As noted earlier, the finished patchwork quilt is not always a representation of all that went on during its production. Rather, the making of a quilt is a highly personal and creative

experience. The freedom of qualitative quilting is that there are a variety of designs, patterns and styles from which to choose. This qualitative case study credits design ideas from a variety of master quilters, such as Merriam (1998), Stake (1995), and Yin (2014). Of course, the researcher-as-quilter also plays a critical role in the finished composition. The rest of this chapter outlines how my epistemology, methodology, and methods are stitched into this completed patchwork quilt.

Epistemology, Methodology and Methods

The objective driving this research project was to learn more about how we can better support teachers' professional learning and development through mentoring, coaching, and induction practices. At the heart of a credible, meaningful, and ethical qualitative quilt is a skilled researcher armed with a rigorous research design and robust research evidence (Aurini et al, 2016; Carter & Little, 2007). The core aim of interpretivist research is to understand people's perspectives in the context of the conditions and circumstances of their lives (Ritchie et al, 2013). Researchers must also reflect on and be transparent about the methodological issues and challenges they face and how their positionality and background might shape the generation and interpretation of data (Court & Abbas, 2013; Savvides et al, 2014). Summed up by Maykut & Morehouse (1994), "[t]he qualitative researcher's perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be acutely tuned-in to the experiences and meaning systems of others—to indwell—and at the same time to be aware of how one's own biases and preconceptions may be influencing what one is trying to understand" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p.55). According to Carter and Little (2007), there are three fundamental facets that provide the framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating the quality of a research study: epistemology, methodology, and method. Often

defined in conflicting ways in the research literature, *epistemology* is described as the justification of knowledge; *methodology* as the justification of methods; and *method* is the research action or the “procedures, tools and techniques” of research (Schwandt, 2001, p.158).

Adopting these definitions, this chapter will now describe each of these elements as they relate to this quilting project.

Epistemology.

Whereas ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and what there is to know about the world, epistemology refers to the study of knowledge and justified beliefs and is concerned with how we learn (Ritchie et al, 2013). I identify as a pragmatic social constructivist. I conceptualize social reality as being generated and constructed by people and that meaning is negotiated socially and historically through the interaction with others (Crotty, 1998; Merriam, 1998). In my research, I am interested in how individuals experience and understand the world in which they live and work. Like Dewey, I am interested in answering the question, “What is the nature of the human experience?” (qtd. In Morgan, 2014, p.1048). In particular, I am interested in the processes of interaction between individuals in specific contexts, especially schools. I believe learning is relational and collective and has the potential to transform individuals, communities, and societies. As a qualitative researcher, I also recognize that I play a pivotal role in the process of understanding the meaning and beliefs my participants bring to their context and how context influences their actions (Maxwell, 2013; Spencer et al, 2003). Best described by Merriam (1998), interpretivist research is always an interpretation of others’ views filtered through the researcher’s own lens. Thus, the researcher must go beyond reflecting the experience of others to also be aware of the limitations of their own reflexivity (Clayton, 2013; Savvides et al, 2014).

As a pragmatist, I am drawn to action and driven by what works. I seek out the ‘right tools for the job’ (Patton, 2002) and available approaches that will make my research credible, well-founded, and reliable (Vo et al, 2012). However, as Morgan (2014) stated, “this captures only part of the message of pragmatism, which places more importance on questions about why to do research in a given way” (p.1046). Guided by my research objectives and questions, I am interested in the ‘practical consequences’ of my work (Peirce, 1962/1907) and ask do these conclusions “shed light on our experience and difficulties in life and enable us to deal with them more fruitfully?” (Dewey, 1917/2000, p.463). For me, it is all about creating knowledge that is useful, helpful and productive (Guttek, 2014; Ritchie et al, 2013). Yet, it is only by putting these ideas into action and experiencing the outcomes that this can be determined (Dewey, 1938/2000). Hence, in the pragmatic worldview, knowledge consists of warranted assertions (Dewey, 1941/2008) and as Morgan (2014) noted, “all our attempts to understand and act in the world are inherently contextual, emotional, and social” (p.1050). As a pragmatist, I also recognize that politics and ethics also play a critical role in all research decisions about which goals are most meaningful and which methods are most appropriate. As I discuss in the next section, I believe my ‘pracademic’ positionality—straddling both the practice and academic worlds—has afforded me the unique opportunity to not only generate academic knowledge but also to test it in practice and experience the outcomes. This positionality also enhances my understanding of how the historical, cultural, and political contexts can influence this type of research project (Morgan, 2014).

Pracademic positionality.

Positionality in this chapter is defined as the background, personal values, views, and location in time and space that shapes human interpretation (Creswell, 2014; Warf, 2010). As

noted above, I identify as a ‘pracademic,’ or someone who “spans the ethereal world of academia as a scholar and the pragmatic world of practice” (Walker, 2010, p.1). Although the term pracademic has a thirty-year history, its original coining remains unclear. A recent literature review by Powell et al (2018) credits Posner (2009) with its recent popularization in the scholarly journal *Public Budgeting and Finance*. The term has been gaining traction in a variety of fields, such as conflict resolution, negotiation, and management (Susskind, 2013; Volpe & Chandler, 2001; Vuković, 2017), political science (Posner, 2009), project management (Walker, 2010), public administration and non-profit management (Powell et al, 2018; Vrentas et al, 2018), organizational studies (Panda, 2014), environmental health (Runkle, 2014), and public policy (Brans & Pattyn, 2017). In the field of education, however, the term has mainly been restricted to popular media platforms such as Twitter and the blogosphere. In this chapter, I flesh out what being a pracademic in education means and conceptualize how this positionality has influenced my inquiry process.

For Walker (2010), one of the core attributes of a ‘true’ pracademic is an intense curiosity about what underpins their professional practice and personal experience. He defines pracademics as “boundary spanners who live in the thinking world of observing, reflection, questioning, criticism, and seeking clarity while also living in the action world of pragmatic practice, doing, experiencing, and coping” (p.2). For both Walker (2010) and Panda (2014), ‘pracademic’ is a pragmatic term for a somewhat rare breed of individual who works at the interface of research and practice. In the field of education, this ‘dual world’ positionality may be less rare considering the popularity of ‘action research’ where practitioners examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully using research techniques (Bogdan & Biklan, 2007; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Ferrance, 2000). However, it is important to note that

pracademia is conceptualized differently in this dissertation from action research or participatory action research (PAR) (Grundy, 1994; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2008). PAR is best described as a framework for creating knowledge that is rooted in the belief that those most impacted by research should take the lead in the project.

Distinct from a teachers-as-researchers stance (Jensen et al, 2012), the pracademic simultaneously straddles the dual worlds of practice and scholarship and works from within both traditions. In this sense they are different from *both* practitioners and academic scholars; they possess the mindset of both, yet exclusively belong to neither group (Panda, 2014). Instead, pracademics are in a constant process of reconciling the demands of ‘multi-membership’ wherein they must navigate different ‘regimes of competence’ (Kubiak et al, 2015). Thus, the effective pracademic must not only learn to negotiate in two worlds, but they must also have established sufficient legitimacy to be respected in both (Kuhn, 2002; Powell et al, 2018). Also, when it comes to publication decisions, the pracademic aims for the research project to be credible and useful in both the world of practice and academia. As noted by in his ‘confessions of a pracademic,’ Susskind (2013) stated, “I measure success by whether a problem is resolved or addressed in a helpful way in the eyes of those seeking help, rather than relying on the approval of peer-reviewed journals” (p.229). That said, for this pracademic completing her doctoral dissertation, approval in both domains would be even better.

In the research literature, the space between the roles of practitioner and researcher is a contested and negotiated site (Jansson et al, 2010; Macduff & Netting, 2010; Reed, 2009). For Panda (2014), it boils down to “a tussle between scientific rigour and practical relevance” (p.143). For academics, methodological rigour and approach are sacrosanct. For practitioners, on the other hand, it is the relevance of the research outcomes to address immediate practical

concerns that is most important (Metzenbaum, 2013; Pettigrew, 2001; Radin, 2013; Vo et al, 2012; Vrentas et al, 2018). Whilst rigour and relevance are both equally valid and valuable, there is a disconnect in how research is transferred into organizational practice (Vo et al, 2012; Zundel & Kokkalis, 2010). Summed up by Panda (2014), “the practitioners, with limited familiarity with the analytical techniques and the research jargons, tend to find the research findings confusing, convoluted and, hence, avoid such research along with their findings terming them irrelevant” (p.146). A recent concern raised in the literature is that when research fails to address the larger questions facing practitioners, these gaps become filled with popularizers lacking academic credibility and competent research skills (Posner, 2009). With educators increasingly turning to social media for practice ideas, this is particularly relevant in the field of education and the source of much online debate. In response, pracademics in education might offer the field what Nesbit et al (2011) describe as “relevance without compromising methodological rigour and theoretical depth” (qtd in Vrentas et al, 2018, p. 95). For Vuković, (2017) pracademics are a ‘hybrid type of specialist’ who marry the best of both worlds. Working at the nexus of practice and research, they have the powerful potential to transpose insights into praxis by virtue of their scholarly qualifications and experience (Volpe & Chandler, 2001).

Being a pracademic researching one’s own place of practice also raises important issues around ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ positionality in qualitative research. As noted by Dwyer and Buckle (2009) it is important for qualitative researchers to clarify their personal motivation and role in the research project since their “membership status in relation to those participating in the research, is an essential and ever-present aspect of the investigation” (p.55). Generally, *insiders* are defined as those researchers who share biography (gender, race, class, language, sexual orientation, and so on), or membership (personally or professionally) with the group under study.

Outsiders, on the other hand, refer to researchers who do not belong to the group under study. They have been described by Gerrard (1995) as those researchers who “parachute into people’s lives...and then vanish” (qd. In Breen, 2007, p.163). Like many other researchers I reject the dichotomous framing of insider-outsider positionality (see Kerstetter, 2012; Perryman, 2011; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Mercer, 2007; Merriam et al., 2001; Merton, 1972). As stated by Dewey (1938): “Mankind likes to think in terms of extreme opposites. It is given to formulating its beliefs in terms of Either-Ors, between which it recognizes no intermediate possibilities” (p.17). Instead, I conceptualize my academic positionality along a continuum. Similar to Susskind (2013), I believe the relationship between the researcher and researched must be negotiated and that a contract is useful to help negotiate the terms (Lawrence Susskind, personal communication, June 19, 2019). Ultimately, as Dwyer & Buckle (2009) state, “the core ingredient is not insider or outsider status but an ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of one’s research participants, and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience” (p.59). Placing positionality along a continuum thus opens up the possibility to embrace and explore the complex and dynamic ‘space between’ entrenched positions (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

In the research literature, insider-outsider positionality is far from a clear-cut issue. There has been a significant volume of work discussing it in various contexts and fields of study (see Asselin, 2003; Breen, 2007; Chavez, 2008; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; DeLyser, 2001; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Kanuha, 2000; Labaree, 2002; Mercer, 2007; Merriam et al., 2001; Perryman, 2011; Serrant-Green, 2002; Sikes & Potts, 2008; Trowler, 2011; Unluer, 2012). Interestingly, there is a dearth of literature around the “hidden ethical and methodological dilemmas” (Labaree, 2002, p.109) for researchers examining one’s own place of work. From

what is available (see Labaree, 2002; Mercer, 2007; Morgan, 2006; Perryman, 2011; Trowler, 2011), there are clear costs and benefits to either position as they relate to issues of accessibility, role conflict, power and influence. This next section will explore how these issues emerged in my research study.

As a pracademic examining a program that I helped develop and co-coordinate, I acknowledge that my positionality in this research project provides me with a greater understanding of the history, politics, language, and local values of the institution that I am studying. I also recognize that my experience in the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) has afforded me greater access to documentation, participants and district support. Having built relationships across the WQSB, I experienced no difficulties getting ethical clearance from the Council of Commissioners, distributing questionnaires, or recruiting volunteers for focus groups and semi-structured interviews. At the same time, I did experience issues around role conflict or role confusion. In a number of instances during the research process, I struggled to balance my role as a practitioner *within* TIP alongside my objectives as a researcher *of* TIP. In particular, I had a hard time separating practice literature that focused on how to improve mentoring and coaching from scholarly literature that would enhance my conceptual framework.

My status in the TIP team also raised important issues of power, bias and influence in relation to my research purpose, objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity (Kanuha, 2000). Throughout this project, I needed to be self-reflexive and vigilant about “loyalty tugs” (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). I had to work on how to better receive constructive feedback and not to take it personally as a practitioner. Wary of confirmation bias and whether my role in the TIP team would encourage only positive reports, I also sought out alternative stakeholder perspectives for the research data set. This effort led to the addition of two key focus groups during my research

project: the first with district consultants outside TIP and the second with union executives from the Western Québec Teachers' Association (WQTA). After a member-check with the WQTA on the focus group transcription and my initial interpretations, I was given the opportunity to meet with the provincial union representative and gather another valuable perspective. Although these latter focus groups were not in my initial research proposal, these data have been essential for the final quilt product.

The pracademic cycle of inquiry.

In the scholarly literature, there have been a number of recent efforts to conceptualize the pracademic position (see Bartoli et al, 2012; Panda, 2014; Susskind, 2013). Building on this work, I will describe how I understand the 'pracademic inquiry cycle' in education (see figure 5). In particular, Susskind's (2013) 'circle of engagement' which builds off Fisher and Ury's (1981) 'circle chart' was most influential.

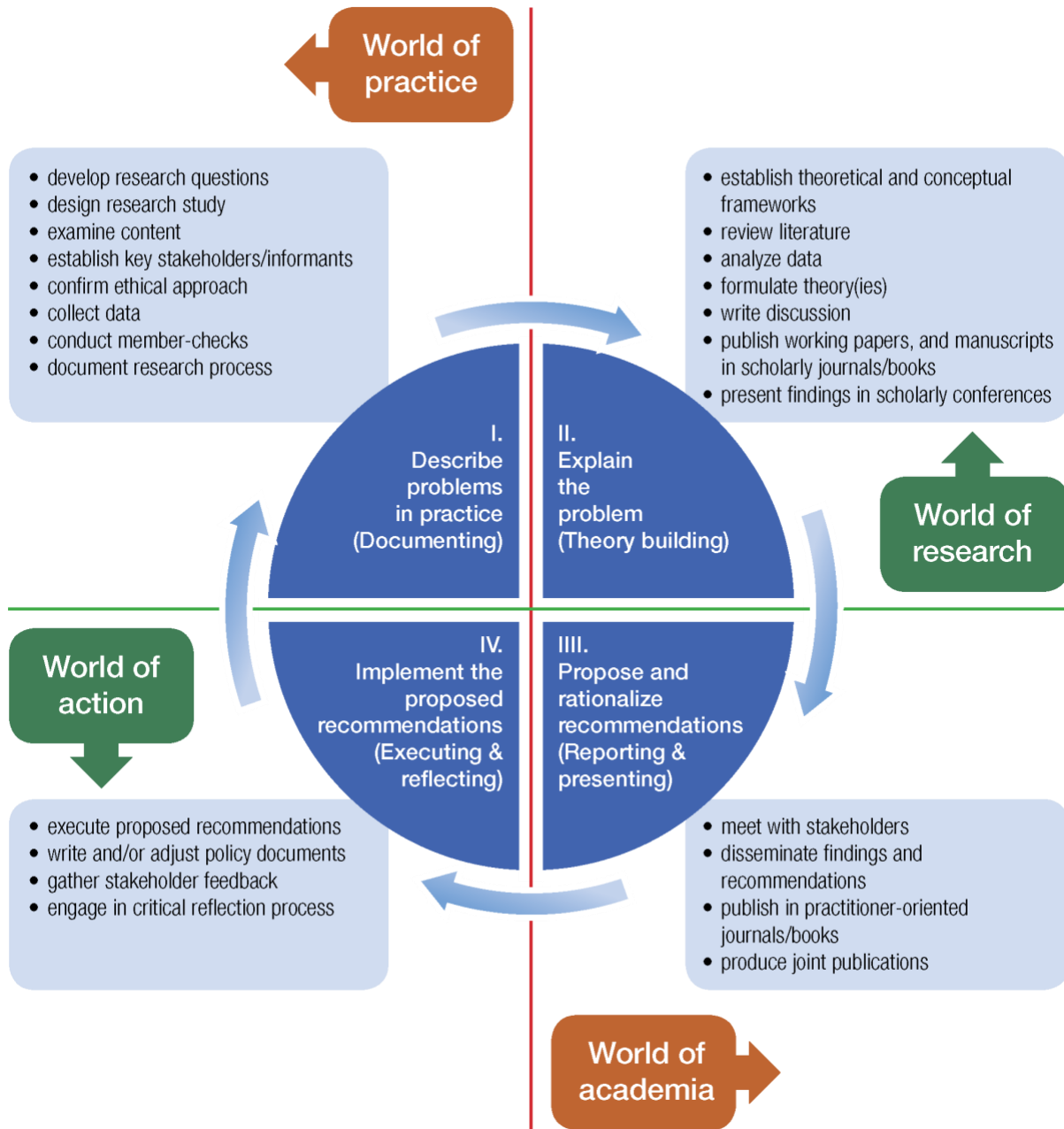


Figure 5: The pracademic cycle of inquiry

Adapted from Susskind’s (2013) ‘Circle of Engagement’

In a nutshell, the upper half of the ‘pracademic inquiry cycle’ is focused on the world of research, such as defining a problem of practice, developing research questions, selecting a research design, exploring scholarly literature, and building general theories. In contrast, the

lower half of the cycle is focused more on the world of action, where solutions are proposed, rationalized and then implemented. The left side of the cycle (Quadrant 1 & 4) is anchored in the world of practice. There, the pracademic is viewed as a gate keeper, an individual who understands the study context, has access to data and is motivated by the research's relevance to their workplace. The right side of the cycle (Quadrant 2 & 3), however, is anchored in the world of academia. There the pracademic brings their scholarly qualifications and experience to bare through their tools of analysis and evaluation (Powell et al, 2018).

Ultimately, the pracademic operates in all four quadrants of the inquiry cycle, existing in a space shared by both theory and practice (Panda, 2014). The pracademic's focus is to understand practice through an academic lens and then move the proposed theories into action, test them in the field, and experience the outcomes. This dynamic and iterative cycle claims many influences. First, it was informed by Freire's (1970) dialectical process of 'praxis', which is best described as a form of critical thinking that combines reflection and action. Praxis is about taking action, considering the impacts of the action, reflecting and analyzing the results of the action, making adjustments based on the reflection, and implementing new action. A second evident influence is the 'problem-solving cycle' (Bransford, J.D., & Stein, B.S. (1993) which begins with recognizing and defining a problem, developing strategies, implementing the strategies, and then evaluating the outcomes. Finally, influences in the 'pracademic inquiry cycle' can also be traced to Argyris and Schön's (1974) 'theory-in-use' process as well as the foundational theories of experiential learning (see Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Lewin, 1951). Although all these influences have been essential to the development of the 'pracademic inquiry cycle', what makes it different is its focus on one's positionality, aims, and actions in research project. A detailed description of each quadrant follows:

Quadrant 1: This quadrant focuses on describing and documenting problems in practice. It is focused on developing and clearly articulating research questions and considering the appropriate research design that will answer these guiding questions. Situated in the world of practice, ethical approval is obtained, key stakeholders contacted, and relevant data is collected.

Quadrant 2: The focus of quadrant two is to examine and explain the problem of practice and build theory. This is the traditional zone of academia where the pracademic uses an established analysis strategy, interprets data with and against the relevant theoretical and conceptual literature, and formulates generalized theories. Initial findings are often presented in working papers and scholarly conferences.

Quadrant 3: In this quadrant, the focus is on proposing, rationalizing and disseminating the research findings and recommendations. Although situated in the world of academia, the focus of this quadrant is on knowledge mobilization. Empirical evidence is presented in various forms to a variety of audiences. The pracademic must consider how the dominant academic language and jargons generally differ from the language used by practitioners (Panda, 2014). This stage in the cycle is about aligning priorities and activities through presentations, teaching, training, reports, and even joint publications with community partners (Bartoli et al, 2012).

Quadrant 4: The final quadrant is focused on the implementation of the research findings and its proposed changes in the world of practice. This stage is an action zone where the research is tested in the field. The pracademic gathers feedback from key stakeholders about the impacts of the research and engages in critical self-reflection. Problems of practice that emerge during this stage lead the pracademic back into quadrant 1 and ignites the iterative inquiry cycle.

Methodology: The qualitative case study

My epistemology as a pragmatic social constructivist and positionality as a pracademic has undoubtedly influenced my methodology. Defined by Harding (1987), a methodology is “a theory and analysis of how research should proceed” (p.2). In this quilting project, I was interested in examining the lived experience of the mentor–coaches in the WQSB’s Teacher Induction Program (TIP). I was also interested in the processes of interaction among the various stakeholder groups in the school district. As such, I crafted two overarching research questions:

- 1) What is the influence of the MC role on experienced teachers’ professional learning, practice, and well-being?
- 2) How do the WQSB stakeholders perceive the impact of the TIP?

From these questions, a qualitative case study method was an obvious choice as research design. As described by Yin (2014), “you will want to do case study research because you want to understand a real-world case and assume that such an understanding is likely to involve important contextual conditions pertinent to your case” (p.16). For Stake (2005), case study “is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied” (p.443). For me, the case study method emerged from both my research questions and my interest in the case as a pracademic engaged professionally with the TIP in the WQSB.

Although the terms ‘patchwork’ and ‘pieced’ quilt imply a freestyle approach to this case study project, there are many well-established patterns that guide its design. In particular, this project relied heavily on the works of quilting masters such as Yin (2014), Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995). I also found Yazan’s (2015) comparative analysis of these three approaches,

Thomas's (2011) typology for the case study, and Flyvberg's (2006) outline of five key misunderstandings in case study research very helpful.

Novice case study quilters are faced with many challenges when they aim to create a dependable and defensible design. According to Yazan (2015), case study research in educational research is challenging as there is no "consensus on the design and implementation, which makes it a contested terrain and hampers its full evolution" (p.34). As a pragmatist, I was focused on the consequences of the research project as I examined the available approaches. I especially appreciated Yin's (2014) call for more rigour in doing case study research and outline of a practical five-step iterative process: design, prepare, collect, analyze, and share. A more detailed description of this process can be found in my published book review (see Hollweck, 2015). For Yin, a 'case' refers to "a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (p.13). He describes case study design as an all-encompassing method or "the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions" (p. 20). As outlined in his book, case study design has five components: a study's questions; its propositions, which reflect on a theoretical issue; its unit(s) of analysis; the logic linking the data to the propositions; and the criteria for interpreting the findings. It is important to note that although Yin (2014) takes great strides in including qualitative case study research in this fifth edition, he works from a positivist lens (Yazan, 2015). Thus, as a qualitative quilter, I found Merriam's (1998) and Stake's (1995) work to be valuable supports for this research project.

Theoretical frameworks, conceptual frameworks and a guiding abductive analysis strategy

For Yin (2014), “theory development as part of the design phase is highly desired” (p.37). The overarching theoretical framework of a case study informs the development of relevant research questions, selection and implementation of methods, as well as its evaluation (Maxwell, 2013, Yin, 2014). As described by Grant and Osanloo (2014), although theoretical frameworks are often used synonymously with conceptual frameworks, they are not the same. Whereas theoretical frameworks are derived from existing and validated theories, conceptual frameworks define key concepts in the study. They describe the logical structure that the researcher uses to show how these ideas relate to one another within the theoretical framework of the project (see Maxwell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Ravitch & Riggan, 2011). For Maxwell (2004), the function of the theoretical framework is “to inform the rest of your design--- to help you to assess and refine your goals, develop realistic and relevant research questions, select appropriate methods, and identify potential validity threats to your conclusions. It also helps you justify your research” (p.33-34).

The theoretical framework that guides this quilting project is the broad social learning theory of ‘landscapes of Practice’ (Wenger-Trayner et al, 2015). This theory is understood as a socially situated, practice-based approach to professional learning, and learning more generally. In this theory, learning is not understood as a uni-directional mental process. Instead, learning, is conceived as a relational and collective process that has the potential to transform individuals, communities, and societies (Wenger-Trayner, 2017; Wenger, 1998, 2006). Building on Lave and Wenger’s (1991) work on ‘situated learning’ and Wenger’s (1998) earlier ‘Communities of Practice’ theory, the Wenger-Trayners (2015) argue that “the ‘body of knowledge’ of a

profession is not best understood as a reified curriculum, but rather as a ‘landscape of practice’ consisting of a complex system of communities of practice and the boundaries between them” (p.13). It is this ‘landscape of practice’ lens has been stitched into the methodology of this patchwork quilt. However, as described earlier in this chapter, each published manuscript or fabric block in this quilt tells its own story. In terms of conceptual frameworks, each block is guided by different concepts: professional learning and development, professional learning networks, mentoring and coaching, teacher well-being, and teacher evaluation. Thus, although the ‘landscapes of practice’ theory guides the overall quilt design, depending on the manuscript purpose and topic, it is not always referenced or suitable.

For Yin (2014), outlining the case study’s key theoretical propositions in the planning stage is an effective analytical strategy. It enables the researcher to explain the case as a gap in the theoretical and scholarly literature and also seek out rival explanations throughout the research process. As a pragmatist, the ‘abductive analysis’ strategy presented by Tavory and Timmermans (2014) was the ‘right tool for this job’ (Patton, 2002). Grounded in the work of pragmatist Peirce (1934), abductive analysis offers researchers methodological guidance on the relationship among data, method, and theory. Essentially, researchers generate theoretical insights from unexpected findings by working iteratively with and against the theoretical and scholarly literature as well as the empirical materials. Posited by Tavory and Timmermans (2014), abductive analysis is best understood as an alternative to the better-known analysis processes of induction, which aims to derive general principles from specific observations, and deduction, which aims to test an existing theory with new observations. Abduction, for them, “is required when you encounter surprising, anomalous observations that do not fit existing theories and need to come up with a new theory to accommodate these observations.” Also, Thomas

(2010, 2011) provides an excellent case for using abductive reasoning approaches as a general analytic strategy in case studies. Thus, this quilt's theoretical framework, conceptual frameworks and abductive analysis strategy were key to this qualitative case study's first two stages: design and prepare. They have also been woven into the methods phase: collect, analyze, and share (Yin, 2014).

Methods

In this patchwork quilt, methods refer to the practical activities of the research project, such as sampling, data collecting, data management, data analysis, and reporting (Carter & Little, 2007). One of the key features of the case study is that it includes many variables of interest, relies on multiple sources of evidence to triangulate, and benefits from prior development of theoretical proposition to guide data collection and analysis. I use the final section of this chapter to describe how each of these aspects were addressed in this quilting project.

Sampling and data collection.

After my ethics from the University of Ottawa and the WQSB were approved (see Appendix A), it was my intention to begin data collection during the academic year of 2015-2016. In this study, I used a purposive (Chein, 1981) or purposeful (Patton, 1980) sampling approach. According to Merriam (1998), “[p]urposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore, one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most” (p. 48). For Yin (2014), rigorous case studies base their selection of participants or sources of data on their anticipated richness and relevance in relation to the study's research questions. Thus, data for my inquiry project were collected from a variety of sources and participant groups: documentation, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and

focus groups. As noted by Yin (2014), the aim is to draw data from multiple sources to capture the case under study in its complexity and entirety. It is important to highlight that like Merriam (1998), rather than view data collection and analysis as linear activities, I engaged in both simultaneously during this project.

Documentation. Because of my pracademic positionality, I had unlimited access to all of TIP's archival records and documentation. In full disclosure, I wrote the majority of its reports and policy from 2008-2016. In particular, one of the primary documents used during the analysis stage was its ever-evolving TIP Handbook (WQSBb, 2018). According to Merriam (1998), "documentary data are particularly good sources for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated" (p.109). I found Merriam's (1998) chapter on mining data from documents very useful during this stage of the research project.

Semi-structured interviews. Considering my main objective for this quilt was to examine the lived experience of MCs in the WQSB, I was interested in conducting semi-structured interviews with four to six active MCs during three critical points in the year (the start of school, mid-year, and the end of the school year). I agree with Yin (2014) that interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because "most case studies are about human affairs or actions" (p.113). I hoped to attract volunteers to this study that would represent a variety of MC experiences (distance, in-school; novice, and experienced; positive and negative experiences). However, despite the best of intentions, research plans often have to change. In my case, at the start of the 2015-2016 year, teachers in the WQSB began a 'work-to-rule' action sanctioned by the provincial union. This work action for teachers meant no participation in 'additional work' such as extra-curricular activities. This also meant that teachers would not be able to participate

in any research project because it was deemed ‘additional work’. As a practitioner in the district, I also wanted to support my colleagues and thus, decided to adjust my expectations and interview schedule.

Once the work action by the teachers ended in late fall, the TIP team administrator sent out a recruitment email to all MCs with an offer to participate in my research study (see Appendix B). Five volunteer participants responded to the call and we arranged to meet twice during the school year (mid-year and in June) at times and locations of their choosing (see consent form in Appendix C). Guided by Seidman’s (2013) *Interviewing as Qualitative Research* text, I chose a more fluid and responsive interview approach (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Using a semi-structured interview structure (Creswell, 2013), I was able to ask open-ended questions that did not limit my respondents’ choice of answers (see the interview protocol in Appendix D). I also was able to capitalize on key moments using cues and prompts to gather more detail from participants (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Throughout the interview process, I was reminded of Fontana and Frey’s (2005) warning that, “interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but rather active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (p.698).

Considering my pracademic positionality, the semi-structured interview was the most challenging for me as a researcher as I had already established relationships with all my interviewees through my role in the TIP Team (Mercer, 2007). During the interviews, I worked hard to avoid interjections, stick to the interview protocol, and allow for extended wait time during the silences. Throughout this process, I also had to consider and negotiate the power or perceived power between myself as researcher and the researched MCs. Providing member checks during the analysis process wherever possible was key in helping me establishing my

research as credible and trustworthy. In June 2016, two additional single interviews with another two MCs were included in the data set. They were interested in discussing their less positive MCF experiences and offered an excellent opportunity for me to gather alternative perspectives.

Questionnaires. Often used interchangeably with the term survey, a questionnaire refers to the content or written set of questions, while a survey refers to the set of questions as well as the process of collecting, aggregating and analyzing the responses. In this study, I developed four different online Fluid Survey questionnaires using a likert scale (1-5) and qualitative comment options (see Appendices H-K). The objective of these questionnaires was for participants to respond to elements critical to both research questions and also get a sense of how TIP was perceived across different stakeholder groups. In early June 2016, I had the TIP team administrator send out a link to the online Fluid Survey questionnaires to four different stakeholder groups: Year 1 TFs (26/51), Year 2 TFs (13/33), MCs (25/42), and administrators (21/28). In order to address potential concerns of anonymity and increase participation, I also included a detailed description of the study, research process, and proof of my ethics approval in the questionnaire's front matter. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were encouraged to contact me directly if they were interested in being part of a follow-up focus group.

Focus groups. Focus group data were collected from six stakeholder groups, administrators (n=5), MCs (n=6), TFs (n=6), TIP team members (n=5), WQTA executive (n=3), and district consultants (n=5). Participants were informed of the focus group at the end of their questionnaire and also by a recruitment email (Appendix E) sent out by the administrative assistant for the Director of Human Resources, Mr. Michel Dubeau. All focus groups met in June 2016 at the WQSB board office and were 1.5 to 2 hours in length. Before the focus group began all participants read and signed the focus group consent form (Appendix F).

The focus group protocol was informed by the work of Krueger and Casey (2009) as well as that of Morgan and Krueger (1998). Each participant contributed to only one focus group, and all MC participants were different from those being interviewed throughout the year. Focus groups were particularly suited for this case study as they allowed for interactive and intensive discussions whereby participants co-constructed their understandings in a shared environment (Kitzinger, 1994). Furthermore, focus groups position participants as experts of their social worlds and can help to reduce unequal power relations amongst the researcher and participants that can manifest in individual interviews.

I used a semi-structured interview guide (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2006) to conduct the focus groups and allow for flexibility (see Appendix G). Once again, I was especially sensitive to ambient power dynamics, especially in the focus group with TFs who, as untenured staff members, may feel pressured to respond positively because of the high-stakes job element embedded in the WQSB's TIP. Although participants were encouraged to speak freely and openly as directed in the consent form, I recognized my pracademic positionality added complexity and potential limitations. However, the inclusion of the WQTA focus group was strategic in order address some of these potentially unspoken concerns and also to elicit alternative perspectives from experienced teachers not directly involved in TIP.

Data management.

In any case study project, it is important to create a case study database (Yin, 2014). In this quilting project, I found the "Framework Method" (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; 2002; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Smith & Firth, 2011) a useful data management tool. The Framework Method may be best understood as a scaffold that guides the iterative analysis process (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). One of its key attributes is its flexibility that enables the researcher to do analysis

during the collection process and also in a more linear fashion. This method will be described in more detail during the data analysis phase.

Data analysis.

Yin (2014) argues that the analysis of case study evidence has been one of the least developed aspects of the method. The researcher must establish an overall general analytic strategy “to produce high-quality analyses, which require attending to *all* the evidence collected, displaying and presenting the evidence apart from any interpretation, and considering alternative interpretations” (p.132). As noted earlier in this chapter, throughout this research project I used the principles of abductive analysis (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014) to support my process of ‘making sense’ out of the data (Merriam,1998). Abductive analysis is an iterative process that works with empirical materials in relationship with and against broad and diverse theoretical, professional, and empirical literature. For Tavory and Timmermans (2014), productive analysis necessitates the capacity to think about phenomena *as if* it were unfamiliar, or strange. This process of ‘defamiliarization’ enables unexpected, anomalous or incongruous findings to emerge, which then can be systematically examined among the accumulated data to generate theories. Theory in this study is described best as an attempt to make sense of the world through generalizations of empirical phenomena.

The Framework Method.

The Framework Method sits within the broad family of analysis methods often called qualitative content analysis or thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006). In this research project, it was a useful tool that enhanced and supported my abductive analysis strategy. The Framework Method was first developed in the late 1980’s by social policy researchers Jane Ritchie and Liz Spencer from the Qualitative Research Unit at the National Centre for Social

Research in the United Kingdom for use in large-scale policy research (Smith & Firth, 2011). Also called the framework approach, it has been gaining popularity in a variety of fields, and especially in health research (Smith & Firth, 2011). There are four central principles that underpin the framework: the research should be contributory, defensible in design, rigorous in conduct, and credible in claim (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). In the Framework Method there are interconnected stages that explicitly and systematically describe the data analysis process from initial coding to thematic development (see Gale et al, 2013; Richie et al, 2013; Smith and Firth, 2011; Spencer et al, 2003). Data is sifted, charted and sorted in accordance with key issues and themes using five steps: familiarization; identifying a thematic analysis; indexing; charting; and mapping and interpretation. Not only did this step-by-step process provide reassurance to this pragmatic novice quilter, but the Framework Method's clear and transparent process enhanced the rigour and credibility of the study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

For Ritchie and Spencer (1994), the prime concern of the Framework Method is to provide a structure for researchers to describe and interpret what is happening in a particular setting. Specifically, one of its defining features is its 'framework matrix' which includes 'rows' (data source), 'columns' (codes and categories), and 'cells' of summarised data. This matrix offers the researcher a structure to systematically reduce and analyze data into themes (Gale et al, 2013). For Gale et al (2013), the Framework Method has two key strengths: 1) it facilitates in-depth analysis within individual data sources and across the whole data set while maintaining an effective and transparent audit trail; and 2) participant voice remains connected to data. However, they also note that: "Although the Framework Method is a highly systematic method of categorizing and organizing what may seem like unwieldy qualitative data, it is not a panacea for problematic issues commonly associated with qualitative data analysis such as how to make

analytic choices and make interpretive strategies visible and auditable” (p.118). I will now use the Framework’s five steps to outline my research process in this study.

Familiarization. I began my research process with verbatim transcribing of the twelve interviews and the six focus groups, which amounted to 500 pages of transcription. As I was interested in the content of the interview rather than the structure of participants’ responses, only long pauses, interruptions and nonverbal communication (such as gestures and laughter) were noted within the text. Transcripts were checked for errors by listening back to the audio-recording and reading the transcripts simultaneously. Each transcript and questionnaire were then read and re-read thoroughly in order to become familiar with the whole data set. Initial impressions were noted in the margins of the transcripts or on the printed questionnaires.

Identifying a thematic analysis. The analysis process began with an ‘open coding’ process on the transcribed texts (Saldaña, 2015). Interesting segments of text were underlined, and each line, phrase or paragraph of the transcript were assigned an initial label or code. I made an attempt to summarise what was being expressed by participants using their own words through ‘in-vivo codes’. For Ritchie and Lewis (2003), this is an important component of the Framework Method because these codes enable the researcher to stay ‘true’ to the data. As an abductive approach, codes and labels were informed by the theoretical and conceptual literature, but as Atkinson (2018) noted, “it is not a matter of mechanistic, quick-and-dirty coding,” (p.416-417). Rather, as noted earlier, the effective abductive analysis required me to think about data and the phenomena through a process of ‘defamiliarization’ (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012). By confronting it as unfamiliar, I gained a deeper appreciation for it and was better able to identify that which is incongruous or anomalous.

In the Framework Method, the starting point is to ‘play’ with the data searching for patterns, insights, or concepts that seem promising. These codes, accompanying transcript text, any preliminary thoughts, and initial categories were recorded in a *coding matrix* that was used to manage and organize the data (see table 3).

Table 3 An excerpt from the TIP Team coding matrix

Adapted from Smith and Firth, 2011)

Initial Codes and themes emerging from TIP TEAM

Quote	Codes (in-vivo)	Preliminary thoughts	Initial categories/ themes	Link to literature
“we really need to look closely at how much time she gave out of her own life to be this coach”- distance coach	‘ <u>time.</u> of her own life’	Personal time commitment	Added to MC workload Resources/time	Engagement/ stress
“She has never once complained about it; she only talks positively about her role this year”	‘never once complained...talks positively’	MC is a positive experience	Engagement of MC Positive experience	Positive/ enjoyment MC experience
“I was also a coach in my school for a year and that experience had a huge impact on my teaching in the school”- TIP coordinator	‘huge impact on my teaching’	Anecdotal- MC impacts teaching practice	Teaching quality improves Growing the top	Achievement/ accomplishment Teaching quality
“and I saw tremendous growth in one of my 3 mentees. I think one of them wouldn’t have made it through the year if I hadn’t been there every day with her.” – TIP coordinator	‘tremendous growth...wouldn’t have made it through the year’	Positive impact on others Sense of accomplishment 3 mentees	Teacher success/ retention	Retention/ accomplishment
“we felt it would be better if we divide up the schools so we could better get to know the fellowships. So even then we were realizing	‘MC is essential to understanding how to support the TF’	Induction PL & mentoring can’t be separated. Fellowships work	Relationships/ fellowships Induction & Mentoring	MC critical to TF PL

Indexing. During this step, the initial codes and categories from the coding matrix were revised and refined to generate initial themes. As an abductive analysis process, a priori themes and issues that derived from the theoretical and conceptual frameworks were positioned with and against the empirical data. Next, portions or sections of the data that corresponded to a particular theme were identified in the textual data, which included the documentation, questionnaires,

interviews and focus groups. Following Ritchie and Spencer’s (1994) recommendation, a numerical system was used for indexing references and annotated in the margin beside the text.

Charting. In the fourth step of the method, specific pieces of indexed data were charted into a ‘Framework Matrix’ for each identified theme. The matrix comprised of ‘rows’ identifying the data source and ‘columns’ per code or category. For clarity, data sources were always kept in the same order in each matrix (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Page and line references to interesting quotations were included and verbatim text was underlined in each cell. The most illustrative and interesting quotes were noted using a scale of Q/QQ/QQQ (Smith & Firth, 2011). Table 4 provides an excerpt of one matrix based on the theme of boundaries and boundary objects.

Table 4 An excerpt from the Framework Matrix

Adapted from Gale et al, 2013)

Group	Boundary Objects- 12 Prof Competencies	Boundary Encounters/ Boundary crossing/ boundary partnerships	Brokers (M-Cs): translation, alignment, connections	Influence of Boundaries
Administrator	<p>12 Professional competencies inform what good quality teaching practices across the district</p> <p><u>The TIP and MCF set a standard across the board, but we don't have that standard across the board for experienced teachers. (p.5, 25-26)</u></p> <p><u>I bet there are many experienced teachers who do not know what the 12 teacher competencies are (I'm pretty sure). It is second nature to us now, right? (p. 5, 29-30)</u></p> <p><u>We have raised the bar on the quality of teaching and I think it looks the same in the rural schools or as close as it can be and there is a lot less discrepancy as there was before. (p.13, 10-12)</u></p>	<p>Facilitates pedagogical discussions "<u>We really are reflecting on what good teaching practices are. I don't think that happens enough and this is an opportunity that forces us to have those conversations which is really great (p.1, 40-42)</u></p> <p>Structured MCF meetings are essential <u>If you don't schedule that in, it doesn't happen (p.1, 35)</u></p>	<p>MC must be master teacher. <u>Choose an outstanding teacher first of all as the base... (p.6, 6)</u></p> <p>Role of conformity, policy followers?</p> <p><u>The few mistakes we have made choosing MCs – we chose staff who may not be policy followers, role models so that in the last 5 years, we have only chosen people who are not disagreeing but those who will be following the policy. I didn't want anyone who will be mentoring to be saying, "It's okay don't worry about that- in my classroom it is okay" We have been trying to weed that out over the entire school... They are very good at planning and they focus on that and don't make excuses (p.6, 12)</u></p>	<p>Spreading across <u>district</u>; leadership opportunity for MC</p> <p><u>now I see it has evolved and we have provided the PL for the coaches to become leaders and I think they feel like they are leaders and they are confident and that has spread through the school- and it is not just for TIP, it is skills that they have developed have benefitted the school in many different ways (p.1, 37-41)</u></p>
TIP	<p>Professional standards are set: we want to <u>ensure a standard across our board. (p.3, 25)</u></p> <p><u>Status quo is not an option (p.3,18)</u></p> <p>Common experience/standard across the district: <u>get the same quality of education at any one of our schools in our board which is challenging because all of our schools are so varied and different. (p.3, 26-28)</u></p>	<p>Knowledge mobilization across the district</p> <p><u>We have become holders and gatherers: the program has allowed us to design strategies and structures for how we can disseminate this information about what good teaching looks like (p.4, 3-6)</u></p>	<p>Experience of MC increases: <u>the coaches who have been doing this for a long time just keep getting better and better (p. 8, 31-32)</u></p> <p><u>the improvement in the quality of the coaches, and the focus on improvement on the coaching practice in the system. The support is getting better as the program is getting better. (p.2, 33-36)</u></p>	<p>Different community members working together:</p> <p><u>[TIP] has highlighted a lot of areas of strengths and expertise in the board (p.4, 12)</u></p>
TF	<p>Prescription vs. guidance <u>There is a disconnect between what I want a teacher to be and what they want a teacher to be (p.8, 32-33)</u></p>	<p>Role of Administrator</p>	<p>MC perspective influenced teachers <u>she was not the be all and end all and if you want to learn about this, talk to this</u></p>	<p>Lack of clarity across district</p> <p><u>I got the impression no one really knew what the TIP was. It seems like</u></p>

Mapping and interpretation. This final step in the Framework Method focuses on the analysis of the data. As noted by Ritchie and Lewis (2003), a crucial element within qualitative analysis is the critical thinking that occurs in relation to how participants' descriptions are coded, links between codes and categories, and links between categories and themes. This process was informed by Yin's (2014) 'pattern-matching analytic technique' for case studies. Based on Trochim's (1989) pattern-matching logic, it compares the pattern emerging from the empirical data to the pattern predicted by the theoretical literature. In particular, during this stage I was looking for instances of congruence and divergence. Unexpected insights emerged as new concepts or themes. The beauty of the Framework Matrix is that it enabled me continuous accessibility to the original transcripts while moving forward and backward between different data sources and the data set as a whole during the development of these final themes. Wherever possible during this process, member-checking was used to make my conclusions and interpretations as credible and trustworthy as possible (Eisner, 1998).

Reporting

The final stage of my quilting process focused on reporting my research findings. It has been recognized that writing and reporting in qualitative research are also part of the analytic process since the researcher's thinking and interpretation generally develop further (Merriam, 1998; Richardson, 2000). During my writing phase, I kept the study's guiding research questions central. As noted earlier in this chapter, the fabric blocks or published manuscripts in this patchwork quilt captured specific moments in time and focused on different concepts as they relate to teacher induction: teacher professional learning and development, mentoring and coaching, and teacher evaluation. These manuscripts were also written with

different audiences in mind. For example, manuscript 1 (Chapter 2) was written as a published chapter in an edited book collection offering a pan-Canadian perspective on new teacher induction and mentoring. Its aim was to capture how mentoring and coaching was being conceptualized within teacher induction in the WQSB. Manuscript 2 (Chapter 4) was a published book chapter for researchers, practitioners and policy-makers that examined the role of a Mentor–Coach Professional Learning Network (MC PLN) as it relates to professional learning and development for experienced teachers. Manuscript 3 (Chapter 5) was written as a scholarly article that focused on the TIP’s Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF) as a supportive structure for MC well-being. Manuscript 4 (Chapter 6) was also a published book chapter for policy-makers, researchers and practitioners. It examined the various stakeholder perspectives around the most contentious pillar of the TIP, teacher evaluation. In an effort to connect the threads from the different fabric blocks as well as highlight study findings and key themes in relation to the research questions, Chapter 7 provides a big picture view of the finished patchwork quilt.

Conclusion and limitations

A finished thesis-by-article is always a dynamic interaction between the researcher and the reader. As stated by Merriam (1998), “[t]he qualitative study provides the reader with a depiction in enough detail to show that the author’s conclusion ‘makes sense’” (p.199). I believe the overall quality of the quilt is directly linked to the quilter’s skill and technique. For Yin (2014), case study design should be measured against four criteria: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. Merriam (1998) also agrees that all research, including qualitative case studies in education “is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge

in an ethical manner” (p. 163). Additionally, Guba (1981) argues that it is by examining a study’s components that its validity and reliability are assessed. Although Yin’s (2014) description of each criterion is useful for the novice case study researcher, it is important to remember that he comes from the positivist tradition. For many interpretivist researchers this raises concerns (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yazan, 2015). Thus, for Lincoln and Guba (1985), *truth value* is offered as a replacement for internal validity, *transferability* for external validity, and *consistency* for reliability (Merriam, 1998). As a pragmatist, rather than get stuck in the terminology, I prefer to focus on the political and ethical consequences from the warranted assertions presented in this study. As a pracademic, I aim for this qualitative case study to be both a scholarly contribution and to make a difference in the lives of my participants and workplace colleagues. Thus, Chapter 8 presents changes that have been made to the TIP as a result of this research project and addresses implications for practice and future research possibilities.

Ultimately, a finished patchwork quilt brings together artistry and functionality, beauty and practicality (Johnson, 2013). In determining the quality of this quilt, I believe it should be examined by whether it is credible, rigorous, meaningful, and ethical (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Tracy, 2010; Yin, 2014). The aim of this quilter’s tale was to reveal some of what went on during the making of this patchwork quilt. However, at the end of the day, judgement is left in the hands of the quilting guild, who are committed to maintaining public interest in quilt-making and helping to keep standards high. Best summed up in the ‘Quilting Standards’ produced by the Canadian Quilters’ Association/ Association canadienne de la courtepointe [CQA/ACC] (2013), “[r]egardless of the type of quilt, the workmanship and construction techniques should be suitable to the function of the quilt. Whether using traditional

or innovative construction techniques, they should be well executed” (para. 1). It is my hope that this chapter has been useful to help you better judge this finished quilt and my execution as its quilter.

Chapter 4—Manuscript 2

Hollweck, T. (forthcoming) Growing the Top: Examining a Mentor–Coach Professional Learning Network. In Schnellert, L. *Professional Learning Networks: Facilitating Educational Transformation*. (Chapter 5). Switzerland: Emerald Macmillan.

**In-text citations and references are formatted according to the Emerald Macmillan guidelines.*

Abstract

International educational research has shown that high quality coaching, mentoring and induction for beginning teachers can enhance development and retention of highly effective teachers and ultimately, increase student success. In Canada, like many jurisdictions, teacher induction programs have grown in popularity as a means to support beginning teachers, yet programs vary greatly in terms of delivery and effectiveness. This chapter presents the findings from a qualitative case study that examined one bespoke teacher induction program in the Western Québec School Board from a ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger, 1998) lens. Specifically, it reports on the experience of mentor–coaches (MC) who are part of the school district’s Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF). In the district, mentoring and coaching are viewed as distinct, yet interconnected components of an effective induction program. In the WQSB, teaching fellows and mentor–coaches learn together in a social and situated context (Lave & Wenger, 1991) as they focus on four key elements: the practice of teaching, navigating school and district culture, what it means to be a teacher, and the formation of a teaching identity. Research has shown effective coaching and mentoring programs not only enhance

teaching and learning, but they also offer powerful benefits to veteran teachers. With mentoring and coaching practice highly diverse and inconsistent depending on the quality of the relationship and the context, it is clear that effective selection, support and professional learning and development of mentor–coaches is fundamental. This chapter examines the strengths and challenges of the school district’s Mentor–Coach Professional Learning Network (MC PLN) from the perspective of network members. Data collected from questionnaires, an MC focus group and semi-structured interviews were abductively analysed with and against Brown and Poortman’s (2018) five supporting conditions for effective PLNs. Study findings indicated that the MC PLN offers valuable professional learning and development for participants and is a critical feature in a powerful induction program that also focuses on ‘growing the top’. However, challenges also emerged that highlight the need for the district to ensure ongoing attention to the PLN’s structure and processes in order to sustain MC motivation, engagement and commitment.

KEYWORDS: Teacher induction, mentoring and coaching, professional learning and development, professional learning networks, collaborative professionalism

Growing the top: Examining a Mentor–Coach Professional Learning Network.

International educational research has shown that high quality coaching, mentoring, and induction for beginning teachers can enhance development and retention of highly effective teachers and increase student success (Croft, Cogshall, Dolan, Powers & Killion, 2010; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Kraft, Blazar & Hogan, 2018; Wang, Odell & Schwille, 2008). There is also evidence that taking up a mentoring and coaching role offers

powerful benefits to veteran teachers (Cullingford, 2006; Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Ganser, 2006; Moir & Bloom, 2003; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). However, the use of mentoring and coaching is diverse and inconsistent across international jurisdictions, especially within teacher induction programs (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kraft & Blazar, 2018; Lofthouse, 2019). In Canada, induction programs are growing in popularity, but vary in terms of design, delivery and effectiveness (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2017).

This chapter focuses on one Canadian school district's mandatory teacher induction program (TIP) and its Professional Learning Network for mentor-coaches (MC PLN). Specifically, it reports on findings from a qualitative case study that examined how mentoring and coaching can support the professional learning and development, well-being, and practice of experienced teachers who take on the MC role. Findings from this study may resonate with systems engaged in PLNs and other professional learning activities for experienced teachers (Brown & Poortman, 2018; Daly & Stoll, 2018), but educational researchers like Andy Hargreaves have cautioned against transplanting educational initiatives from one district to the other, without considering what may be needed for them to be effective in a sustainable way within a specific context (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2016; Hargreaves, 2008; Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018). Hence, this chapter begins with a description of the school district's context and addresses some of the cultural, social, educational, philosophical, and political conditions in which the TIP and MC PLN are situated (Fransson, 2010). Next, in recognition of the importance of precise language to "bridge the rigor to relevance gap" (Daly & Stoll, 2018, p.373), key terminology such as mentoring, coaching, PLNs, and professional learning and development (PLD) is unpacked. Finally, the key elements of the MC PLN are outlined and analysed with and against Brown and Poortman's (2018) five supporting conditions for effective PLNs.

Context

The Western Québec School Board (WQSB) is one of nine English language school boards in the predominantly French-speaking province of Québec. Servicing the anglophone communities in the Outaouais, Pontiac, and Abitibi-Temiscamingue, the WQSB is a large and diverse territory situated on unceded Algonquin land, comparable in size to Ireland. It comprises 25 schools including rural, suburban and urban, elementary (K-6), secondary (7-11), and multi-grade (K-11) contexts. In the 2018-2019 academic year, the district's population was 7,298 students, 450 teaching staff, 22 principals and eight vice-principals (WQSB, 2018a). The WQSB's large geography and diversity makes professional development and teacher collaboration challenging. Historically, it has also struggled to attract, develop, and retain effective teachers, especially teachers in specialized areas such as French, mathematics, science, and special education. Almost 25 percent of the WQSB teaching staff (110/450) are within their first two years of teaching in the district (WQSB, 2018a). There are many contributing factors (e.g. salary, politics, geography) that challenge recruitment and retention in the district, especially in the rural and northern schools (Hollweck, 2017).

Whereas a certain level of teacher attrition within the profession is necessary and healthy, high teacher turnover is costly to schools, challenging to collaborative cultures, and detrimental to student learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Ingersoll, 2001; Karsenti, Collin, Villeneuve, Dumouchel, & Roy, 2008; Kutsyruba & Walker, 2017; OECD, 2005; Ryan & Kokol, 1988). In an effort to better support all teachers new to the district, as well as improve teaching and learning across the district, in 2009, the WQSB implemented a mandatory TIP. In the district, induction is conceived as a

“helping mechanism” (Serpell, 2000, p.3) and is closely aligned with Wong’s (2004) definition: “Induction is a process—a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development process—that is organized by a school district to train, support, and retain new teachers and seamlessly progresses them into a lifelong learning program” (p.42).

The WQSB TIP

The WQSB TIP is a mandatory two-year program that focuses on supporting and improving the professional learning and development, practice, and well-being of all new teachers (regardless of previous teaching experience) to the district, called *teaching fellows* (TF). In the 2018-2019 academic year, there were 55 Year One and 56 Year Two TFs in the TIP (WQSB, 2018a). Since the province of Québec has a decentralized approach to education, administrators are responsible for the hiring, professional learning and development, and evaluation of their teaching staff. To support administrators and ensure consistency across the district, TIP was designed with three aims: 1) to retain effective teachers new to the district; 2) to ‘grow the top’ by providing leadership and professional growth opportunities for veteran staff; and 3) to improve teaching and learning across the district. With few guidelines from the Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur (MEES) on teacher induction, mentoring, or coaching, the TIP was first developed and coordinated in 2008 by a small volunteer committee of administrators, teachers, and district leaders. Initially a voluntary and piloted program, the TIP is now mandatory and coordinated by a team of two part-time consultants (one at 80 percent and the other 50 percent). There are three key pillars to the TIP: Professional Learning (PL), the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF), and Teacher Evaluation. The focus of this chapter is on the PLN that supports MCs within the MCF.

The TIP pillars.

With an aim to balance quality assurance with professional growth in the TIP, the PL pillar refers to the six optional, district-led professional learning days offered each year for TFs. The MCF pillar also supports professional growth and refers to the pairing of every TF in their first year of the TIP with an administrator-selected, non-evaluative MC. As outlined in the TIP Handbook (WQSB, 2018b), MCs are ideally an experienced master teacher from the same school, same grade, and same subject area as the TF. However, when there are many Year One TFs, distance MCs are also engaged, and MC teaching expertise varies. Expected MCF activities are regular mentoring and coaching sessions, reciprocal classroom observations, and the development of a *Reflective Record*. The reflective record is designed to provide TFs with an opportunity to demonstrate ongoing professional growth through personalized goal setting, documentation, and reflection. Each fellowship is also provided with two “Fellowship Days” that can be used to observe teachers in different classes or schools. Of all three pillars, the MCF consistently receives high ratings by WQSB stakeholders (administrators, TFs, and MCs) on TIP’s yearly feedback survey and is considered “the most valuable part of the TIP” (TF questionnaire).

Whereas the PL and MCF pillars support professional growth, the teacher evaluation pillar is more focused on quality assurance. In short, the pillar refers to a two-year high-stakes (“job or no job”) evaluation process. To qualify for the WQSB’s Priority of Employment and be eligible for a tenured teaching position, TFs need two successful summative evaluations to be completed by their school administrator. These summative evaluations are based on data collected during the school year, including classroom observations and the reflective record. Although the TIP Handbook (WQSB, 2018b) describes the pillars as distinct and separate, many

WQSB stakeholders see them as intertwined, with the teacher evaluation pillar the most contentious element of the TIP (see Hollweck 2017; Hollweck, Curry, Smith, Dubeau, & Kharyati, 2019).

In the WQSB, teacher evaluation is the responsibility of the school administrator (WQSB 2018b). However, tensions emerge for stakeholders around the influence of the TIP evaluation process on the MCF (Hollweck, 2019). Union executives have raised concerns about whether the MCF has become more focused on “helping get [the TF] through evaluation” than on supporting professional growth. What role (if any) teacher evaluation should play in mentoring and coaching is hotly debated in the research literature (see Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Fransson, 2010; Hobson & Malderez, 2013; Hobson, 2016; Rippon & Martin 2006; Wang & Odell, 2007; Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008). With compelling arguments on both sides, the WQSB recognized that more transparency around the non-evaluative aims and purpose of the MCF was needed, which became a key focus for the MC PLN.

Unpacking the Terminology

Mentoring and coaching.

In educational research as well as practice literature, terms such as mentoring and coaching are often ill-defined, conflicting, and even conflated (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education, 2005; Kraft & Blazar, 2018). In the WQSB, the terms *mentoring* and *coaching* are conceptualized as two complementary but distinct dialogical approaches that are

essential for professional learning during teacher induction (see Figure 1).

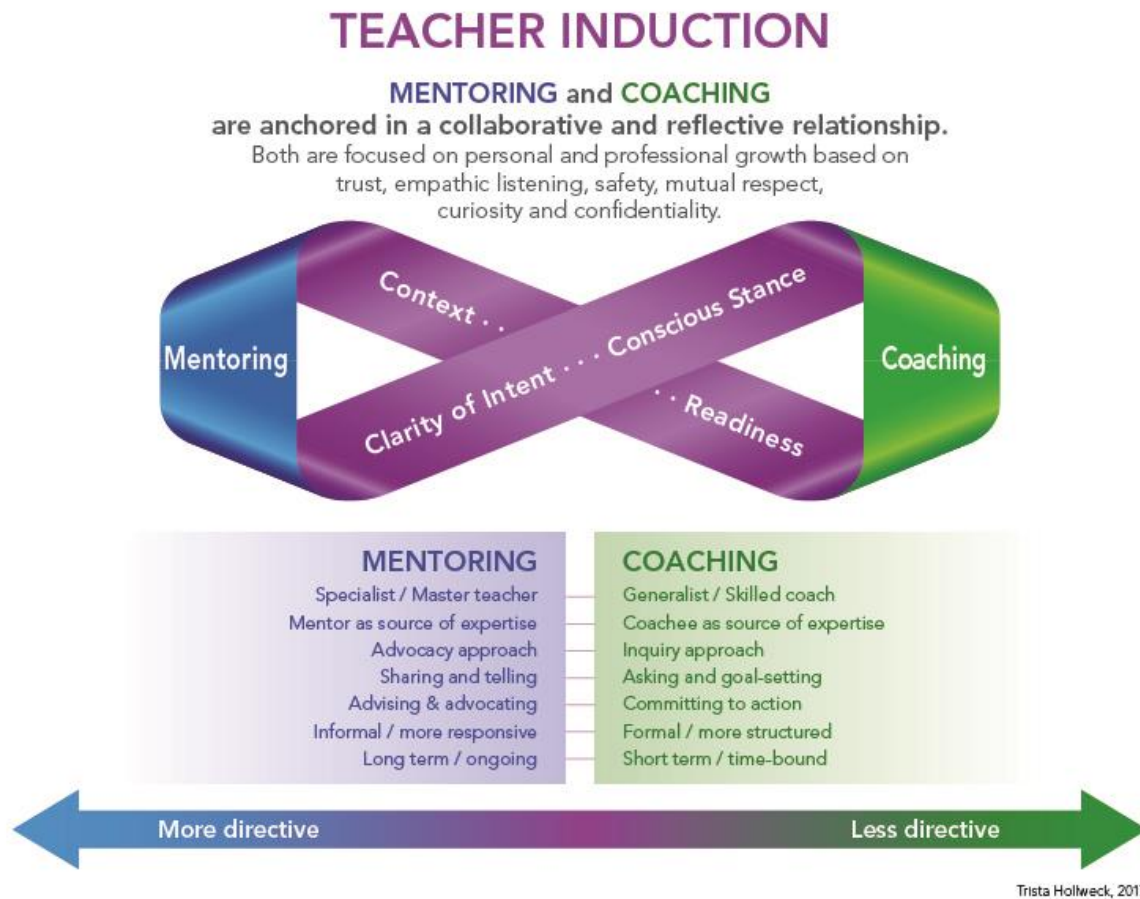


Figure 6. Mentoring and coaching during teacher induction (Hollweck, 2017)

As noted in Figure 1, both mentoring and coaching are anchored in collaborative and reflective relationships based on trust, empathic listening, safety, mutual respect, curiosity, and confidentiality. Placed along a fluid continuum, mentoring is understood as more directive than coaching. Whereas a mentor shares expertise and experiences, provides resources, and acts as an advocate, a coach takes a more facilitative approach and asks questions to help the TF find their own answers and “unleash potential” (Whitmore, 2010). A critical component of the coaching process is helping TFs set meaningful goals focused on improving student learning and well-

being. Whereas non-evaluative and reciprocal classroom observations with debriefs are a required component of the MCF, MCs can use a variety of mentoring and coaching models and approaches.

Research has shown that effective mentoring and coaching depends on the quality of the relationship, the nature of the setting, and the skill of the MC (Kyriacou & O'Connor, 2003; Strong & Baron, 2004; Tickle, 2000; Totterdell, Bubb, & Heilbronn, 2002). For many experienced teachers, understanding the difference between mentoring and coaching and how and when to use each approach is challenging. Thus, meaningful professional learning, practice, and support is essential (Aguilar, 2013; Bullough, 2012; Campbell & van Nieuwerburgh, 2018; Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Gareis & Grant, 2014; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Knight, 2007; Schwille, 2008; van Nieuwerburgh, 2017; Wang, Odell & Schwill, 2008; Wexler, 2019). The MC PLN was established to support the professional growth of individual MCs and to build consistency and effectiveness in the MCF process across the district.

Professional learning and development (PLD).

Like mentoring and coaching, the terms professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL) are often used interchangeably and with no definitive distinction (Borko, 2004; Campbell et al, 2016). For Fullan and Hargreaves (2016) professional learning involves encountering “something new that is potentially of value” (p.3), whereas professional development refers to “growth in terms of who you are and what you can do” (p.3). In this sense, PL is often deliberately structured and can represent “a mosaic of diverse experiences, opportunities, activities, and outcomes” (Campbell et al, 2016, p.7). PD, on the other hand, involves many aspects of learning, and also includes that which helps “teachers build character, maturity, and virtues in themselves and others, making their schools into moral communities”

(Hargreaves, 2003, p. 48). Fullan and Hargreaves (2016) offer the combined term of PLD, conceptualized as a Venn diagram (see figure 7), as a better way to describe how educators learn and also grow as people and professionals. PL and PD do not eclipse one another, but they do have a lot of mutual interaction and overlap: “In the end, there should be no development without learning, and learning can and often should entail development” (p.4).

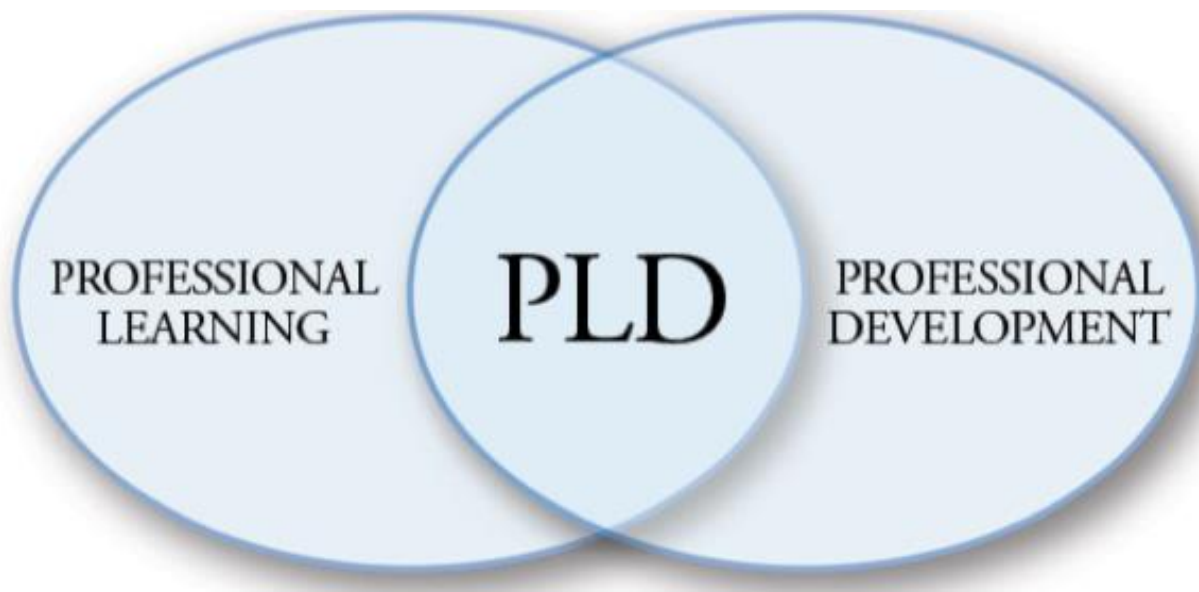


Figure 7. Professional Learning and Development (PLD) (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2016)

Through its design and delivery, the MC PLN aims to offer structured professional learning around mentoring and coaching, which can ultimately lead to the professional development of experienced teachers in the WQSB.

Professional Learning Networks (PLNs).

The term PLN is conceptualized in a variety of ways in the research and practice literature. In the WQSB, the MC PLN is most closely aligned with Brown and Poortman’s (2018) definition: “any group who engage in collaborative learning with others outside of their everyday community of practice (Wenger, 1998), in order to improve teaching and learning in

their school(s) and/or the school system more widely” (p.1). With PL at the heart of a PLN, learning is understood not as a uni-directional mental process, rather as a relational and collective process that has the potential to transform individuals, communities, and societies (Wenger, 1998, 2006; Wenger-Trayner, 2017). The PLN must account for the quality of both member relationships and PLD activities, which need to be useful, relevant, and anchored in members’ “home” environment (Brown & Poortman, 2018; Daly & Stoll, 2018; Wenger, 1998). When the solidarity of safe, supportive, and trusting relationships is combined with the solidity of robust and rigorous content, focus, and structure, a sense of “collaborative professionalism” (Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2018) is established in the PLN, which makes transformational change in teaching and learning achievable.

At the core of effective PLNs there is an expectation of “authentic collaboration” (Daly & Stoll, 2018). The PLN is more than a structured time for members to build community; it is a time to build competency through collaborative inquiry (Butler & Schnellert, 2012), explore leadership, develop personal agency, and contribute to school and system improvement (Cherkowski & Schnellert, 2017). Each participant is simultaneously an autonomous individual as well as a networked member of the group. As stated by Wenger-Trayner (2017), “the value of belonging to a learning network rather than attending a one-off event is that you have access to stories about what fellow practitioners have tried and how it worked for them” (p.24). In the MC PLN, members are given time to learn, practice, and reflect on how different coaching skills, approaches and models can be applied in their MCF context (van Nieuwerburgh, 2017). As members report on their individual experience with mentoring and coaching in the PLN, the collective learns from and with one another. It is the development of these “learning loops” that

can lead to increased relational and collective learning in the PLN (Wenger-Trayner, 2017).

Summed up by Daly and Stoll (2018):

Knowledge generation therefore is a socio-culturally embedded process conducted through, between, among, and with people who reside in social networks and those networks are inescapably tied to the work of educators in a variety of contexts. It is the quantity *and* quality of ties that are consequential for both individual and collective outcomes as well as transformative change. (p.370)

Thus, the aim of the MC PLN is to cultivate collaborative professionalism and a sense of both individual and “collective efficacy” (Donohoo, 2016). The aim is for MCs to believe that the work they do in the MCF matters and that as a collective they can make a difference for learners in their classrooms, schools, and beyond (Campbell et al., 2016; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2016).

The MC PLN: Intent, Design and Structure

Brown and Poortman (2018) argue that all PLNs are defined by geography, membership (or composition), and the nature of the learning. These elements are used to illustrate the overall intent, design, and structure of the WQSB’s MC PLN. For instance, concerning geography and membership, all WQSB MCs, regardless of experience, are invited to be part of the MC PLN. Two to three times a year, formal PLN sessions are held at the district office in Gatineau, Québec. The sessions are primarily facilitated by the TIP team. Considering the distance between the school board and some of the WQSB schools, attending the MC PLN in person requires significant travel for many members. Supply teacher and travel costs (including one night of accommodation for the Northern MCs) are covered through the TIP budget. As to the nature of the learning, the MC PLN is focused on building strong relationships among MCs as well as

improving mentoring and coaching practice in schools and across the district. Time is built into every formal meeting for MCs to build relationships, learn and practice new coaching skills and processes, and exchange ideas and best practices in small groups or large community circles (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015; Evans & Vaandering, 2016; Riestenberg, 2012). The PLD activities have focused on exploring effective coaching models and skills, such as classroom observations, goal-setting, building trust, asking powerful questions, listening with empathy, having hard conversations, and giving and receiving feedback (Abrams, 2009; Aguilar, 2013/2018; Bungay-Stanier, 2016; Jackson, 2013; Knight, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2010; van Nieuwerburgh, 2017).

The MC PLN has been tasked over the years with clearly defining the terms, co-creating the district's MCF professional competencies with accompanying observable features, and most recently, co-creating a MC self-evaluation document. Through structured learning conversations (Daly & Stoll, 2018), MCs inquire together about what it means to be an effective MC, what high-quality teaching in the WQSB entails, and how best to respond to challenging situations. MCs are offered leadership opportunities, such as to facilitate the PLN activities and community circles. Understanding that PLNs do not automatically lead to school and system improvement (Prenger, Poortman, & Handelzalts, 2018), all members are encouraged to provide constructive feedback on ways to improve the TIP as well as mentoring and coaching practice in the district. The theory of action that guides the MC PLN is that by "growing the top" and attending to the PL of the experienced teachers who take up the MC role, mentoring and coaching practice in district schools will improve, which will lead to improved teacher performance and well-being, and culminate in improved student performance and well-being across the WQSB (Brown & Poortman, 2018; Desimone, Smith, & Philips, 2013).

Strengths and Stretches of the MC PLN

Based on their review of the PLN literature, Brown and Poortman (2018) highlight five key interconnected elements for successful PLNs to make transformational change in teaching and learning: focus, collaboration, reflective professional inquiry, leadership, and group and individual learning. Considering changes to one or more of these elements will likely trigger changes in others, these elements require ongoing attention at both the network and system levels (Brown & Poortman, 2018). To outline the MC PLN, the five supporting conditions were used as an abductive analysis framework (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014) to highlight the network's strengths and stretches. Data used were from a variety of sources (questionnaires, TIP documentation, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews) collected in 2016 as part of a larger doctoral project.

Focus.

Focus refers to the existence of a shared goal for the PLN that provides its members with a sense of purpose and direction (Brown & Poortman, 2018). For experienced MCs, the development of a common language around mentoring and coaching across the district was one of the PLN's greatest successes. As stated by Alice³:

So, it is now part of the discourse. We have a discourse of coaching and mentoring which we didn't have before. And it is not just with the people who are in the program, but with others . . . I think everybody seems to talk about who their mentor or coach is . . . even my admin[istrator].

³ Pseudonyms have been used for all interviewed MCs in the district

Another reported strength was the network's focus on co-creating the MC professional competencies and self-evaluation documents. Described by Valerie, this focus "has been very helpful to standardize what our role is as a MC in our school board." Clarity in the MCF process gave MCs more confidence: "I have gone back to my school and said, 'well- yeah there is a reason why we do this in our district'" (MC focus group). However, for staff who have not been a part of the TIP, or who are not aware of the substantial changes that have been made since TIP's inception, confusion around the terms and mistrust of the process remain: "They don't understand what it is—they don't understand the whole program. . . They think it is going to be someone who will show [the TF] where the photocopier is" (Alice). Or as one union executive explained in their focus group: "Mentoring to me I see almost as more working collaboratively and an opportunity to vent and get frustrations out and I see coaching as trying to mold you to get through the TIP." For Laurie:

I think that most of the time people critique if they don't understand or are afraid of it or feel some shame around it. I don't actually feel like anyone who really understood the program or worked in the program would have that experience.

Hence, further clarity of the MCF purpose and process is still required across the district (Datnow, Hubbard & Mehan, 2005).

Collaboration.

According to Brown and Poortman (2018), the most frequently cited supporting condition for effective PLNs is collaboration (see Datnow & Park, 2018; Katz & Earl, 2010; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). Deep collaboration goes beyond a superficial exchange of help, support, or assistance and engages teachers with a range of knowledge, experience, and expertise to open up their beliefs and practices to investigation and debate (Brown & Poortman, 2018). Recognizing

vulnerability is at play during deep collaboration, the MC PLN has made an effort to develop a safe, supportive, and trusting learning community. As one MC noted in the focus group: “It is so formal [in other places]. The PD is done this date and you grab a coffee and sit in an auditorium. And we are doing community circles...I think it shows it is a WQSB thing and something we value.” Study participants credited the PLN as an opportunity to bond with other MCs throughout the year, create community, break down physical and cultural geographical barriers, increase networking and professionalism between “like-minded individuals” (Cathy), and stimulate growth and change. As stated by Winnie:

So, whenever we just have the chance to meet and talk, I thrive on that, I love that . . . so you have that similarity, that connection . . . I think that you can’t go wrong with a group of people wanting to do better . . . it is nice to be in a room with people who believe in the program, like it, [and] who have stayed in it rather than be with people who are negative and saying, ‘this is just something that needs to be done.’

Deep collaboration in the MC PLN extends beyond community building and sharing of practices to meaningful debate and discussion about teaching and learning. For Cathy: “that was the best professional dialogue that I have had in a long time ... You do things a certain way ... but it is always great to hear what someone else is doing and get a bunch of different ideas.” However, additional platforms that provide MCs a space to share key learning, best practices, and resources beyond the formal PLN meetings needs further attention by the district. As noted by Schnellert, Fisher and Sanford (2018), such spaces are powerful because they can welcome diverse ideas and the exploration of possibilities so that new and innovative practices can emerge, connect and develop. Although network coordinators have not found success using online technologies (e.g. Google community, an MCF newsletter, and blogging), the development of sustained and

participatory digital spaces is worth considering as “potential high leverage points” (Daly & Stoll, 2018, p. 366).

Reflective professional inquiry.

According to Earl and Timperley (2008), structured learning conversations that use various forms of evidence to help teachers inquire into effective pedagogy are what drive real change in student learning. In the MC PLN, learning conversations focus on how to improve teaching and learning through effective mentoring and coaching. The diverse membership of the PLN also affords MCs with “a rich resource of ideas and perspectives with which to engage and learn from” (Brown & Poortman, 2018, p. 6). For Tim, this meant:

I had to be very cognizant that the way I teach is not the only good way. I have to be more aware of what is out there in terms of a variety of ways to teach and we have to be able to offer advice, solutions to problems or help someone brainstorm through a problem and lead them through to a solution that might not necessarily be one that you would be going to[ward].

In the PLN sessions, MCs had opportunities to actively and collectively questioning ineffective teaching routines while finding proactive means to acknowledge and respond to differences and conflict (Brown & Poortman, 2018; Little, 2005). For many study participants, the MC process had a profound impact on their classroom teaching. They noted: “It helps me stay in tune with emerging best practices” (questionnaire); “It forces me to question myself. I go back to reflection and how I can better question myself and push myself through” (focus group), and “It has made me look at learning from the kids’ perspective” (focus group). For Cathy, being an MC “makes me practice what I preach . . . and consider how I am talking about things. It makes me look at my class from a different angle and lens to try to figure it out.” Additionally, for Tim, “any time

you are working with someone who is learning, it teaches you about the learning process and you can take that to your class.” With reflective professional inquiry a clear strength emerging from this study, the MC PLN is now working to explore different PLD structures and processes, such as collaborative inquiry (Butler & Schnellert, 2012; Donohoo, 2013; Donohoo & Velasco, 2016), data use (Datnow, 2018; Schildkamp, Lai & Earl, 2012; Schildkamp, Poortman & Handelzalts, 2016; Sharratt, 2018), culturally responsive teaching, pedagogy, and coaching (Aguilar, 2018; Gay, 2010; Hammond, 2014), and the use of video in coaching (Knight, 2017; Thompson & Kosiovek, 2017).

Leadership.

Leadership refers to the significant role both formal and informal leaders within the schools, district, and the network play in supporting the PLN (e.g. money, time and resources), stimulating focus, and establishing the structures, policies, and procedures that enable it to flourish (Brown & Poortman, 2018). In the MC PLN, network leaders are also the TIP coordinators. Study participants credited these leaders for their approachability, investment, and support for the success of the PLN: “The people who want you to have a growth mindset have a growth mindset” (MC focus group).

At the formal PLN sessions, experienced MCs are also invited to take a leadership role. Presenting on MCF experiences and best practices was described by one focus group participant as “something that scares me, but I did it with someone and it makes me feel so, so good. There are a lot of things we do here that build up my confidence.” For Tim, the MC role has provided him with a “place to grow professionally. I like this because I tried admin and it wasn’t for me and this gives me a chance to be a lead teacher.” However, for Alice, a different challenge is needed: “I think now, in my fifth year, to be quite honest, I feel like I am growing out of that role

and I am sort of trying to figure out where I want to go with it next.” In order to stretch PLN members, a more distributed or shared leadership approach may be worth considering to further motivate and incentivize members to continue their involvement and keep growing the top (Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Harris, 2013; Munby & Fullan, 2016; Spillane, 2012).

The administrator’s role in supporting the MC PLN also emerged in this study as an area needing further attention. In the words of Alice, “Is this valued at the school? Does the administrator value it? Or is it just the coach?” In some cases, participants did not always feel supported in attending the formal PLN sessions: “Principals want the PD [Professional Development] days...like my principal wasn’t happy about today” (MC focus group). For others, there was a concern about the administrator’s understanding of the MCF and TIP: “You get the information from the board but then you are just hoping the admin[istrator] is on the same page” (Tim). Considering that most of the MCF work is done in MC’s home schools, many participants highlighted a need “for a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the coach because their perception varies by school” (focus group), especially when it came to the TIP teacher evaluation process.

Finally, although the MC PLN is predominantly comprised of a strong, passionate, and motivated group of veteran teachers, some participants questioned the MC selection process and felt that some network members were not as invested in the process:

I don’t know how principals are selecting coaches sometimes. I think it is a sacred job. I really do. I think to be an excellent MC you need such a basket of skills that are both pedagogical, personal, interpersonal. It is such a huge skill set so I think it is really important that the selection is done well with people who really want to do it. (Laurie)

Administrators would benefit from more clarity and transparency around the MCF and TIP, as well as the MC-selection process, because “when the administrator believes in this program...that makes a difference” (Mary).

Group and individual learning.

The final supporting condition of effective PLNs outlined by Brown and Poortman (2018) is the role of “self-reinforcing learning loops” (Wenger-Trayner, 2017) whereby the activities and progress made by the group not only influences individual member learning, but individual members’ perspectives and experiences also influence the collective learning of the group. The MC PLN has focused on improving individual and collective coaching practice, since “there is content to being a coach and it is not just intuitive” (Alice). Hence, the PLD activities target what van Nieuwerburgh (2017) calls the three basic components of coaching: 1) a way of being (Rogers, 1995), 2) a systematic process (i.e. Whitmore’s [2010] GROW model), and 3) coaching skills such as empathic listening to encourage thinking, asking powerful questions, summarizing and paraphrasing, and giving and receiving feedback. Focus group participants reported that the “cutting-edge PD” has kept them current and engaged: “We are very progressive and that is motivating—it makes you want to do more, be more.” It takes time and practice for MCs to understand, negotiate, and “get better at switching in and out of those roles” (Laurie). Many participants reported that it took about three years in the role for them to gain confidence in their skills as an MC. Summed up by Laurie:

I think I have learned how to, or am still learning of course, to coach. My coaching skills have gone from maybe having some kind of idea about what coaching is to feeling that I am getting better and better at the coaching piece. I think I was a natural mentor, but it is

really exciting for me that I have been able to develop this really important skill of working with people to help them get to their own place.

One of the most important PLN elements for new MCs is the opportunity to learn from more experienced members: “Learning from other ideas from other people or identifying problems that I don’t necessarily have, but other people may . . . it sets me up so that I can deal with anything like that” (Cathy).

One of the major challenges emerging from this study was how to best support and manage the diversity in MC experience, skill, and will in order to keep all members engaged, motivated, and continuously learning and growing.

It is a hard group to impress. You have the top teachers; they are cutting edge and doing their own self-study and degrees and you are trying to impress them with something new.

It is tough. You can’t throw them something that is three years old; we have moved on (Tim).

Feedback from participants regarding PLN activities range from: “there is often too much information given at once for us to soak up” to “a lot of the PD was content I had read/attended/participated in already so it was re-listening and re-learning and not informative.” In an attempt to strike a balance, the MC PLN has begun to offer a differentiated approach with “new and nearly new MC sessions (WQSB, 2018b) that focus on the coaching basics (Knight, 2012; van Nieuwerburgh, 2017). The aim is to get newer MCs “reading from the same page and have the same mandate” (Valerie), while reserving the formal PLN sessions for “different philosophies on coaching and different scaffolds or different questions that are out there” (Alice). Ultimately, the MC PLN strives to offer “PD that is purposeful, meaningful, personal, and productive” (Winnie) and “one more layer that is making us better teachers” (focus group).

Conclusion and Next Steps

Considering there are no provincial guidelines directing mentoring, coaching, and induction in Québec school districts, the MC PLN plays a critical role in developing and shaping the MCF in the WQSB. Through the MC PLN, an iterative process has been established: the network learns and practices together, individual MCs apply MCF learning in their individual school contexts, and constructive feedback is shared with the network and TIP coordinators. For MC focus group participants, the fact that the MCF is “not written in stone” and that “the board is listening to feedback from teachers—new teachers as well—to try and the make the program fit our needs and not make it another project” was highlighted as a significant strength:

For me to say that [the GROW model] didn't work for me this year. . . . and knowing that comment is okay [and] that there is time invested to discuss that. . . . What didn't work?

What can we fix? That is huge! (Focus group)

Being part of the MCF and the MC PLN was described as a source of pride by many participants. For Cathy, the fact that “my board is investing in me to improve . . . makes me really proud to work for this board.” Described by Tim, “learning and getting better is exciting and you get pride in your profession.” Finally, Valerie noted that being an MC “provides me with another opportunity and many times I feel like it is very selfish on my part to be a participant in this process, but I do love it.” With research showing that the most advanced networks build shared ownership among participants, ceding further control to the members to influence the MC PLN's design, focus, and delivery is a natural next step (Hargreaves, Parsley, & Cox, 2015).

The MC PLN has many strengths, as outlined in this chapter. It has contributed to greater understanding around mentoring and coaching in the district; built a strong community for MCs

anchored in collaborative professionalism; offered meaningful and relevant professional learning for experienced teachers that has influenced their professional practice; and established an iterative process through the development of self-reinforcing learning loops, which contribute to ongoing and recursive growth for individual members, the network, and the MCF. However, in light of these successes and considering the ever-increasing diversity in MC experience, skill, and will, the challenge for the MC PLN is how to continue to attend to the MC PLN's five supporting conditions in order to sustain MC motivation, engagement, and commitment. Also, further clarification of the MCF process is needed so that all teachers, administrators, and schools can benefit from developing professional expertise in mentoring and coaching, which has the potential to lead to lasting transformational change in teaching and learning across the school district.

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Chapter 5—Manuscript 3

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Abstract

Single Sentence Summary: This paper examines the mentor–coach role as a supportive structure for experienced teachers’ well-being capacity in one Canadian school district.

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to report on a qualitative case study that examined the potential benefits, challenges, and implications of the mentor–coach (MC) role as a supportive structure for experienced teachers’ well-being and sense of flourishing in schools.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The qualitative case study used data collected from surveys, interviews, focus groups, and documentation. Data were coded and abductively analyzed using the ‘framework approach’ with and against Seligman’s well-being PERMA framework. In order to include an alternative stakeholder perspective, data from a focus group with the district’s teacher union executive are also included.

Findings: Using the constituting elements of Seligman’s well-being PERMA framework, experienced teachers reported positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment from their MC experience. However, the MC role is not a panacea for

educator well-being. Rather, the quality and effectiveness of the mentoring and coaching relationship is a determining factor and, if left unattended, negative experiences could contribute to their stress and increased workload.

Research Limitations/Implications: The data used in this study were based on a limited number of survey respondents (25/42) and the self-selection of the interview ($n=7$) and focus group participants ($n=6$). The research findings may lack generalisability and be positively skewed.

Originality/Value: This study contributes to the current lack of empirical research on the MC experience and considers some of the wider contextual factors that impact effective mentoring and coaching programs for educators.

“I Love This Stuff!”: A Canadian Case Study of Mentor–Coach Well-being.

Schools need to be healthy, safe, supportive, and productive sites where every child can flourish academically, socially, and emotionally. With academic learning and well-being inextricably linked, international educational systems are focusing on the promotion of student well-being (Cherkowski and Walker, 2016; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2017; Seligman, 2011). Relatedly, teacher well-being has also been the subject of increased enquiry in educational discourse and research agendas (see Cherkowski and Walker, 2018; Hobson and Maxwell, 2016; Kidger *et al.*, 2016; McCallum and Price, 2010; Ott *et al.*, 2017). Considering the international consensus within research that teachers are the most important in-school factor contributing to student success, satisfaction, and achievement (Danielson, 2011; Hattie, 2012; Kutsyuruba *et al.*, 2016; Sanders and Rivers, 1996; Strong, 2011), it is no surprise that there is interest in how the well-being of teachers influences the

quality of their work (Roffey, 2012). As stated by Parsons (2018), “In short, students thrive when teachers thrive” (p. 231).

What does well-being mean, and what are some of the conditions, forces, and influencing factors that support educators’ well-being in schools? Can taking on a mentoring and coaching role increase teachers’ well-being? These are some of the questions that prompted a qualitative case study to examine the lived experiences of mentor–coaches (MCs) in a small Canadian school district. Data collected from surveys, interviews, focus groups, and documentation were abductively analyzed (Tavory and Timmermans, 2014) with and against Seligman’s (2011) PERMA⁴ well-being framework to explore the potential benefits, challenges, and limitations of the MC role as a supportive structure to cultivate experienced teachers’ well-being. Whereas most research literature examines the impact of mentoring and coaching on new teachers, this study examined the impact on the MC in relation to well-being and aimed to contribute to a growing research base that responds to the question: “What’s in it for the mentor?” (McCorkel *et al.*, 1998, p. 93; Holland, 2018, p. 110). In this study, most participants reported that being an MC was a meaningful experience and positively contributed to their sense of well-being. However, for others, negative mentoring and coaching relationships were reported to be emotional and added to their workload and stress level. Thus, although the MC role was found to offer powerful benefits to experienced teachers, it is not a panacea for teacher well-being.

The Context of the Study

⁴ The PERMA acronym stands for positive emotion, engagement, (positive) relationships, meaning, and accomplishment and will be discussed in more detail later in the paper.

The Western Québec School Board.

The ‘case’ (Yin, 2014) of this study was an English language school district in the Canadian province of Québec. Whereas geographically the Western Québec School Board (WQSB) is comparable in size to the country of Ireland, its population is small and comprised of 7,298 students, 450 teaching staff, 22 principals, and eight vice-principals (WQSB, 2018a). Historically, the large distance and varying contexts of its 25 schools have made attracting and retaining teachers challenging, especially in its northern and rural schools and in specialized subject areas of French and Special Education. To date, almost 25 percent of the teaching staff (110/450) are within their first two years in the WQSB. Researchers have shown that the constant hiring and training of teachers make building collaborative cultures challenging and is detrimental to student learning (Guarino *et al.*, 2006; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; Ingersoll, 2001; Karsenti and Collin, 2013; Kutsyuruba and Walker, 2017; OECD, 2005). In an effort to better support all teachers new to the WQSB, as well as ensure effective teaching and learning across its schools, a two-year mandatory Teacher Induction Program (TIP) initiative was implemented in 2009.

Teacher Induction Program.

With education a territorial and provincial responsibility in Canada, the Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur (MEES) establishes the aims and directives for the Québec education system. It also governs, licences, and regulates the teaching profession. However, since the province is anchored in a decentralized model, individual school boards and schools are responsible for the hiring, evaluation, and professional learning (PL) and development of their teachers. As such, although the MEES provides guidance around teacher mentoring and induction (Kutsyuruba *et al.*, 2013; MELS, 2003), the TIP was developed and

implemented by a volunteer committee comprised of district administrators, consultants, and teachers. The TIP has three aims: first, to retain effective teachers new to the district (called teaching fellows), second, to provide leadership and professional growth opportunities for experienced teachers as *MCs*,⁵ and third, to improve the teaching and learning across all district schools (Hollweck, 2017). The TIP is most closely aligned with H.K. Wong's (2004) definition that induction is "a process—a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development process—that is organized by a school district to train, support, and retain new teachers and seamlessly progresses them into a lifelong learning program" (p. 42). Through its three pillars—PL, a mentoring and coaching fellowship (MCF), and teacher evaluation—the TIP aims to balance quality assurance with support and professional growth. However, as Hollweck (2017, 2018, 2019) has argued elsewhere, tensions exist. This article focuses on the MCF pillar and examines the experience of MCs through Seligman's (2011) PERMA well-being framework.

Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF).

Researchers have shown that effective mentoring and coaching supports the PL and development of new teachers (Ingersoll, 2012; Matsko, 2010; Stanulis and Floden, 2009; Villar *et al.*, 2003; H.K. Wong, 2002, 2004). In the WQSB, all TFs in their first year of the TIP, regardless of previous teaching experience, are paired with an administrator-selected MC. As outlined in the "TIP Handbook" (WQSB, 2018b), MCs are ideally experienced "master" teachers from the same school, grade, and subject area as the TF. However, depending on the school context and the number of TFs, distance MCs are sometimes engaged, and teaching expertise and experience vary. Researchers have argued that the mentoring and/or coaching role can also offer

⁵ The terms teaching fellow and mentor-coach will be explained in more detail later in the paper.

powerful benefits to veteran teachers, such as professional renewal, leadership opportunities, and PL and development (Bullough, 2012; C. Campbell *et al.*, 2016; Carver and Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Ganser, 2006; Hobson *et al.*, 2009; Moir and Bloom, 2003; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). This study examined these benefits in relation to teacher well-being.

The terms mentoring and coaching are often ill defined, conflated, or even used interchangeably in the research and practice literature. In the WQSB, mentoring and coaching are conceptualized as two distinct, yet complementary, approaches anchored in a collaborative and reflective relationship (J. Campbell and van Nieuwerburgh, 2018; Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education [CUREE], 2005; Fletcher and Mullen, 2012; Knight, 2007; Moir and Bloom, 2003; Sharpe and Nishimura, 2017). Whereas mentoring is understood as more of an advocacy approach that is informal, directive, and long term, coaching on the other hand is understood as an inquiry approach that is more formal, facilitative, and short term (Hollweck, 2017). As shown in Figure 1, the stances are interconnected and positioned along a continuum within the WQSB's TIP.

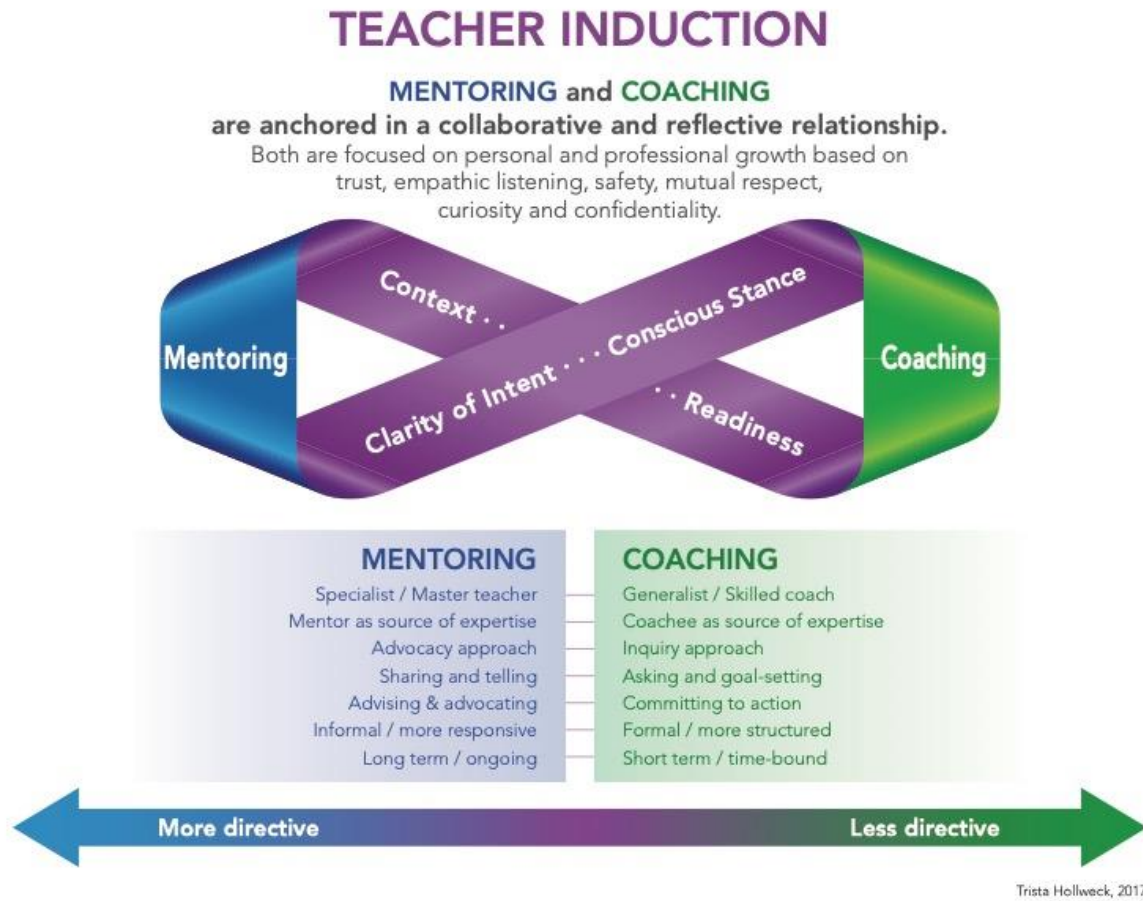


Figure 8: Mentoring and coaching in the TIP (Hollweck, 2017; WQSB 2018b)

The mentoring and coaching literature is clear that good teachers are not always effective mentors or coaches, and that training and support is essential (Bullough, 2012; J. Campbell and van Nieuwerburgh, 2018; Gareis and Grant, 2014; Schwille, 2008; Timperley, 2001; Wang *et al.*, 2008; Wexler, 2019). In the district, PL activities are offered by TIP consultants and external providers and are designed to support MCs in improving their coaching skills (van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). Through these activities and experience, study participants reported

enhanced understanding of when and how to use either a mentoring or a coaching stance in response to the needs of their TF.

In the MCF, learning is understood as social and situated (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998, 2015). As a *community of practice* (Wenger, 1998), the MCF has a defined shared domain of interest, whereby the MC and TF work together as a fellowship or learning community to develop a shared practice by focusing on four key elements: the practice of teaching, navigating school and district culture, what it means to be a teacher in the WQSB, and the formation of a teaching identity. Outlined in the “TIP Handbook”, the TF engages in regular mentoring and coaching sessions with their MC, reciprocal formal and informal classroom observations, as well as ongoing and documented goal setting and reflection in a “reflective record”. The MCF also provides each MCF pair with two district-funded “fellowship days” that can be used to observe teachers in different classes and/or schools. Indubitably, the district’s high-stakes (job or no job) evaluation policies frame the MCF and inform what teaching and learning looks like in the district (Hollweck *et al*, 2019). However, since schools and school districts are “landscapes” of interconnected communities of practice (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner, 2015), positive and effective mentoring and coaching relationships have the potential to support, nurture, and promote well-being within and across schools and the district (Daly and Stoll, 2018). An overview of the scholarly and theoretical literature related to well-being follows.

Literature Review

Stress, burn-out, and toxic schools.

Students need passionate, competent, and committed educators. Yet, teachers and administrators are the professionals reporting the highest levels of negative emotion, job stress and burn-out across many countries (McCallum *et al.*, n.d.; Sutchter *et al.*, 2016). Since teacher stress and burn-out have been shown to decrease teacher effectiveness (Cook *et al.*, 2017), it is important to consider the difference between healthy stress and toxic stress. Whereas healthy stress has been shown to help challenge, motivate, and develop people, toxic stress refers to the type of stress that occurs when demands consistently outpace one's ability to cope (Aguilar, 2018). When left to fester, this type of stress can not only lead to individual burn-out but can also infect the culture of the learning environment and even contribute to the creation of "toxic schools" (Woodley, 2018).

Toxic stress also differs from burn-out, which refers to a distinct condition of exhaustion that results from prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job. In the research, toxic stress is characterized as physical and emotional fatigue, apathy, disengagement, frustration, anger, depression, and dysfunction (Curry and O'Brien, 2012; Maslach *et al.*, 2001; Maslach and Schaufeli, 2017). According to Aguilar (2018), "Toxic stress first manifests as decreased productivity, and escalates to more serious symptoms such as anxiety, dissociation, frustration, and eventually, burn-out" (p. 4). There are three burn-out dimensions used in the Maslach Burn-out Index: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Maslach and Leiter (1997) defined burn-out as the "index of the dislocation between what people are and what they have to do. It represents an erosion in values, dignity, spirit, and will" (p. 17). Not surprising, research shows that educator stress and burn-out factor heavily in teacher turnover rates (Curry and O'Brien, 2012; Howard and Johnson, 2004).

There are many multifaceted factors contributing to toxic stress and burn-out that can differ based on a teacher's personality, experience, and even career stage. Whereas researchers have linked burn-out to job attrition in early career teachers, job withdrawal in experienced teachers manifests more as frequent absences, loss of motivation and engagement, or reduced self-confidence and self-esteem (Aguilar, 2018; Howard and Johnson, 2004). Toxic stress and burn-out have also been found to be more prevalent in teachers who have dysfunctional relationships with colleagues and/or administrators, and who work in urban areas, secondary contexts, and hard-to-staff areas such as special education, mathematics, science, and foreign languages (Aguilar, 2018; Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond, 2017; Howard and Johnson, 2004). Contributing factors are work intensification, punitive accountability systems, frequency of disruptive student behaviour, issues with parents, low level of agency in policy-making procedures, and even "compassion fatigue" (Ott *et al.*, 2017) described as the feeling that teachers are unable to support the well-being of students (Day *et al.*, 2007; Hargreaves, 2003; Kane and Francis, 2013; A. Koenig *et al.*, 2018). With constant change and contradictory, under-resourced, and imposed reforms also frequently linked to educator stress and burn-out, caution must be taken in the discussion of yet another teacher well-being initiative, such as mentoring, coaching, or teacher induction.

Well-being and flourishing.

Well-being and flourishing literature have re-emerged as strength-based alternatives to teacher stress and burn-out. The majority of the derivatively labelled "happiness" literature is found in the field of positive psychology (Hone *et al.*, 2014). For founder Martin Seligman, positive psychology is described on his website as:

the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.

(Positive Psychology Centre 2019)

Positive psychology is about the concept of well-being. In his book *Flourish*, Seligman (2011) defined well-being as a multidimensional construct that bridges the hedonic aspect of feeling good (positive emotion) with the eudaimonic aspects of living well (relationships, purpose, mastery, growth, and autonomy). Five contributing well-being elements together form the acronym PERMA: positive emotion, engagement, (positive) relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Each element has three properties:

- 1) It contributes to well-being.
- 2) Many people pursue it for its own sake, not merely to get any of the other elements.
- 3) It is defined and measured independently of the other elements (exclusivity).

(Seligman, 2011, p. 16)

The combination of these five elements ultimately contributes to human flourishing (Goodman *et al.*, 2018). Flourishing is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) as a state in which every individual can realize his or her own potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and contribute to his or her own community. In this research study, well-being is considered a key component of human flourishing, but the terms are not synonymous.

More than mere “happiology,” Kristjánsson (2017) argued that the re-emergence of flourishing theories harkens back to the Aristotelian ideal of the good human life (eudaimonia),

and that the “best theory” is pluralistic—both objective and subjective—with different pathways leading to human happiness. However, one of the major challenges for educational researchers is that there are a number of competing theories and visions for well-being and flourishing in the scholarly literature. Additionally, there is no stable and uncontested definition or measure for well-being (Cherkowski and Walker, 2016; McCallum *et al.*, n.d.; P.T.B. Wong, 2011b; P.T.B. Wong and Roy, 2017). Best summed up by Kristjánsson (2017), “by broaching the topic of human well-being, one inevitably enters into a welter of controversy” (p. 28). Huppert *et al.* (2005) defined well-being in broad terms as a positive and sustainable state that allows individuals, groups, or nations to thrive and *flourish*. In the field of education, researchers have linked teacher well-being to the nature of their work (Nias, 1981; Shirley *et al.*, in press). Specifically, teachers’ work should buoy their sense of purpose (Pink, 2011), increase competence and mastery (Pink, 2011; Ryan and Deci, 2000), be anchored in “collaborative professionalism” based on solidarity and solidity (Hargreaves and O’Connor, 2018a, 2018b), support a sense of “collective efficacy” (Donohoo, 2017; Donohoo *et al.*, 2018), and lead to a sense of accomplishment (Pink, 2011). In summary, teachers flourish when they are working as a collective doing meaningful work that is achievable and makes a difference in the lives of students.

Problematizing well-being and flourishing.

Although a detailed critique is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note that Seligman’s (2011) well-being theory and positive psychology in general are not without their critics. According to P.T.P. Wong and Roy (2017), “Seligman’s PERMA theory of well-being is, strictly speaking, not a formal theory, but rather a listing of phenomena that have been shown to be related to well-being” (p. 147). Since other elements could easily be added to this list, such as

Duckworth's (2016) grit and H.G. Koenig's (2011) spirituality, PERMA should not be viewed as an exhaustive list of basic conditions or underlying mechanisms of well-being. In referencing his own positive psychology 2.0 "deep and wide" theory, P.T.P Wong (2011a) made the case for a more balanced and inclusive approach in positive psychology, which integrates the complex interaction between both negative and positive phenomena in order to optimize positive outcomes across situations and cultures.

Christopher and Hickinbottom (2008), Wright (2013), and Warren and Donaldson (2017) are also critics of Seligman's (2011) seemingly culture-transcendent and universal concept of human well-being. They argued that there are significant cultural differences in the definition of well-being and criticized positive psychology researchers like Seligman for excluding non-hegemonic cultural contexts in the discussion of well-being. Crivello *et al.* (2009) argued that well-being must be considered "a socially contingent, culturally-anchored construct that changes over time, both in terms of individual life course changes as well as changes in socio-cultural context" (p. 53). Also, Margolis *et al.* (2014) cautioned that it is unrealistic and unsustainable to place the sole responsibility for teacher well-being on the teachers themselves. As Berryhill *et al.* (2009) stated, "making changes in individuals when the system is part of the problem leaves basic structures intact and is unlikely to affect the problem ... Therefore, policymakers should consider making changes for teachers rather than in teachers" (p. 9). Finally, concern was also levied by Wright (2013) against the corporate agenda that links well-being to increased productivity and performance in the workplace.

Ultimately, well-being and flourishing remain complex and contentious issues (Forgeard *et al.*, 2011; Goodman *et al.*, 2018; OECD, 2013, 2015; Tomyne *et al.*, 2013). Additionally, Seligman's PERMA framework is only one of many models that researchers have used to

measure well-being (see Diener, 1984; Huppert and So, 2013; Keyes, 2002; Deci and Ryan, 2008; Ryff and Singer, 1998). However, Seligman (2018) argued that “PERMA is a good start on the complex work-in-progress that will result in an adequate theory of the elements of well-being” (p. 335). Recent empirical work comparing PERMA to other models (see Goodman *et al.*, 2018; Hone *et al.*, 2014) offer researchers new ways to measure teacher well-being and conceptualize what it means for educators to flourish in schools. In this study, Seligman’s holistic PERMA framework was used because it remains, in spite of the criticisms and critics, the most widely adopted well-being measure in the Canadian educational literature (see Cherkowski and Walker, 2018; Shirley *et al.*, in press) and as such was found to be a useful model to examine the relationship between the MC role and experienced teachers’ well-being in a Canadian school district.

Methodology

This study is one part of the researcher’s larger qualitative doctoral project that examined the lived experience of MCs working in the WQSB. Its guiding research question was:

RQ1. In what ways (if any) did the well-being of experienced teachers increase as a result of being an MC?

The researcher identifies as a pragmatic social constructivist and is interested in the processes of interaction between individuals in specific contexts, especially schools. Mentoring and coaching are conceptualized as social phenomena that require “in-depth” exploration. As such, Yin’s (2014) case study design was selected as a strategy of inquiry because it “comprises an all-encompassing method—covering logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis” (p. 17).

Rigour and transparency in the research process are essential in the production of ethical and credible interpretivist research (Court and Abbas, 2013; Gale *et al.*, 2013; Savvides *et al.*, 2014; Spencer *et al.*, 2003). In this study, the researcher was positioned as a “pracademic” (Posner, 2009; Runkle, 2014; Susskind, 2013; Volpe and Chandler, 2001; Walker, 2010)—a “boundary spanner” (Katz and Earl, 2010, p. 48) who embodies the dual role of academic and practitioner. This unique positionality raised methodological issues and challenges. As an “insider” and co-coordinator of the TIP in the WQSB, the researcher was afforded greater access to the program’s history, documentation, key stakeholders, and ongoing practice, and easily recruited volunteer participants during the data collection process. However, there were ongoing concerns whether participants would be honest and critical of the TIP. Critical perspectives were sought and data from a focus group with three members of the district’s union executive (the Western Québec Teachers’ Association (WQTA)) were included. Transcripts and interpretations were member-checked to increase credibility.

Data collection and participants.

Using Yin’s (2014) case study protocol, data were collected using multiple methods: surveys, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and TIP documentation. An anonymous online survey was completed in June 2016 by 25 of the 42 MCs. Participants’ experience as MCs ranged from one to eight years. From the survey respondents, six volunteers participated in a follow-up focus group held at the end of June 2016. Concurrently, data were collected from two semi-structured interviews with another seven different MCs in January 2016 and June 2016, respectively.

Data analysis

Data were coded and abductively analyzed (Tavory and Timmermans, 2014) using the “framework method” (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). This rigorous and transparent analytical matrix or data management tool enabled the researcher to move back and forth across as well as within individual participant “cases” until coherent codes and categories emerged (Gale *et al.*, 2013; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). There were nine distinct methodological stages in this study: (1) transcription of the interviews and focus groups, (2) familiarization with the data from all sources, (3) initiation of open coding from the raw data in the interview and focus group transcripts (Boyatzis, 1998; Saldaña, 2015), (4) categorization of initial codes by individual MC “case” in order to retain the emerging unique narratives, (5) application of Yin’s (2014) “pattern-matching analytic technique,” whereby the pattern of similarly coded and categorized data were abductively analyzed with and against *a priori* themes from Seligman’s (2011) PERMA well-being framework, (6) exploration and interpretation of the relationship and/or causality between the empirical categories and the *a priori* themes to surface unexpected insights and emerging tensions, (7) summarization of the data by category and theme with the inclusion of interesting or illustrative quotations by MC “case”, (8) member-checking the unique codes, categories, and pertinent quotations with the participants, and finally, (9) reporting on the study’s findings in relation to the guiding research question.

Findings and Discussion

Overall, the findings indicated that being an MC in the WQSB provided important benefits for experienced teachers and supported their well-being. Empirical data were analyzed with and against Seligman’s (2011) PERMA well-being framework to highlight the ways participants reported positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment.

However, tensions also emerged in the study around the influence of clarity transparency and challenging MCF relationships.

Positive emotion.

The hedonic “positive emotion” element is a cornerstone of Seligman’s (2011) well-being theory (p. 16). It is a subjective variable and best measured through self-report. All questionnaire respondents agreed with the statement “I found the mentor–coach experience enjoyable this year,” with 60 percent strongly agreeing. All interview and focus group participants also described the MC experience as “enjoyable,” “rewarding,” “fun,” “enriching,” and “fulfilling,” even if they had also reported having a more challenging MCF experience. For example, Winnie⁶ described her year as having “ups and downs like a rollercoaster,” but ended her interview describing the MC role as “not even a job, it is fun. I love this stuff!” Similarly, Valerie reported experiencing relationship challenges with her TF but stated, “The overall experience, I love it. I just love it ... It has been very rewarding, and I find that I am learning a lot from the varied experiences—positive and negative.”

Positive emotion emerged in this study as related to high job satisfaction, passion, excitement, and pride. For Tim, enjoyment was linked to personal and professional growth: “Getting better is exciting and you get pride in your profession. I am good at what I do because I work at it.” Experienced MCs also reported sustained excitement and job satisfaction. As stated by Valerie, “I feel like I am getting more out of the program than I am actually giving.” Reflecting on her eight years in the role, Laurie noted, “I think it has been one of the greatest

⁶ All MC names from the interviews are pseudonyms.

highlights of my career.” Although Seligman (2101) argued that the positive emotion variable is purely a subjective measure, the researcher noted a palpable sense of positive energy, passion, and vibrancy emerging from participants in this study. This positive energy was also addressed in the MC focus group:

If you look at this room, you are all so positive and glowing with enthusiasm and happy ... you couldn't have picked a better group to volunteer! But really you can hear the enthusiasm around the room and the ownership of this program and personal ownership and you think, wow!

Engagement.

According to Seligman, “engagement” is also a subjective well-being element best measured through self-reporting. It is most often reported in a retrospective state since “thought and feeling are usually absent during the flow state” (p. 17). Engagement was described by Bakker *et al.* (2008) as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by workers who are full of energy (vigour), strongly involved in their work (dedication), and often fully concentrated and happily engrossed in their work activities (absorption). All questionnaire respondents agreed to the statement that the MC role made them a more reflective and effective practitioner. Engagement was also reported by interview and focus group participants, regardless of whether their MCF experience was positive or negative. For example, Cathy reflected that despite a difficult relationship with her TF:

[...] it keeps you fresh and challenged [...] For me it was a learning experience and now I will know what I will do different next time because it is not like you can get more PD [professional development] on how to get along with someone you don't get along with.

MC engagement was understood in this study to derive from ongoing and job-embedded PL, intrinsic motivation, and a focus on reflexivity. In total, 76 percent of questionnaire respondents strongly agreed that being an MC promoted their professional growth. They described in their comments that the role made them “more accountable to myself,” “keeps me on my toes,” “keeps us from getting stagnant in my growth,” and “forces me to practice what I preach and not get comfortable and slip!” When asked what value being an MC brought to them, one participant noted,

It has tremendous value. I have challenged myself in ways that I have never been challenged before. I have also learned a lot about myself. It’s almost like a reminder to yourself to reflect and grow constantly. It also keeps me on my toes and keeps me accountable. I like that I have to better myself and challenge myself constantly.

(Questionnaire)

This view was echoed by interview and focus group participants. For example, Winnie remarked, “I like that I am able to improve as well and that it is not just focused on my teaching fellow growing, but it is focused on me as well.” For many participants, learning to be an effective MC was most engaging. For Laurie, although mentoring was “a more natural stance,” she stated,

You learn how to be a better and better coach, right? I think back to my first teaching fellow and I know that I was a great mentor for her, but I probably didn’t push maybe as much as I do now. Now I push—when I push them it is because I believe in them and I believe in the program.

In this study, participants reported that it took them around three years to be effective as both a mentor and a coach. However, participants also reported that since every TF and MCF situation was different, there were always new opportunities to learn and improve as an MC. This is best

summed up by Valerie who was working with a struggling TF as an experienced MC: “It was quite a few new learning opportunities for me because it was out of my comfort. This is not what I was anticipating as a seasoned teacher and mentor–coach.” Sustained positive engagement through learning to coach is well documented in the research literature. As stated by Lofthouse (2019),

[Coaches] go on to experience coaching as itself a formative process, one through which they learn more about themselves, the educational contexts, dilemmas and opportunities and of their own skills and capacity for coaching. Coaching in education is not a static practice with a pre-determined and acquired skills set, but one which seems to evolve over time. (p. 40)

Positive relationships.

Positive relationships and the care and concern for others is a critical element in well-being (Seligman, 2011, 2018). Deci and Ryan (2008) position “relatedness” in their self-determination theory as one of the basic human needs. In this study, enduring PL relationships and friendships also emerged as one of the most valuable components of the MCF. All MC questionnaire respondents reported positive relationships with their TF. For one respondent, “The most valuable aspect [of the MCF] is the relationship that is built and hopefully lasts as a reciprocal professional support.” The benefit of enduring relationships was also highlighted in the MC focus group: “As a past coach, someone who has been around for a long time, I have people that I have coached and we are still really good friends and we share things back and forth.”

Teachers flourish when they build empowering relationships that focus on PL and collaborative work (Parsons, 2018). Effective teacher collaboration can build a sense of

collective efficacy or a shared belief that working together can improve student learning and achievement (Donohoo, 2017; Hibbert *et al.*, 2018). In this study, positive relationships were often described by MCs when they had managed to find an effective balance between support and challenge. In describing her relationship with her TF, Laurie noted,

There were some tears but I think that I had established a really caring relationship with her so I could do that and I had to do that, because I thought- wait a minute...I have grown into being able to do that over the years. To trust that they know that it is coming from a place of caring and affection and respect for them and for their students- those little people are counting on you.

Hence, the MC role was not only about being an advocate, cheerleader, and friend to the TF, but also hinged on the MC's ability to set high expectations and encourage professional growth. For Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018a, b), this type of relationship is an example of collaborative professionalism described as "deep and sometimes demanding **dialogue**, candid but constructive **feedback**, and continuous collaborative **inquiry**" (p. 3, emphasis in original).

From this study, positive MCF relationships hinged on trust, comfort, and safety (Bryk and Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2000). Vulnerability also emerged as a key ingredient, although it was not automatic. As defined by Brown (2015), vulnerability "is about sharing our feelings and our experiences with people who have earned the right to hear them. Being vulnerable and open is mutual and an integral part of the trust-building process" (p. 45). Alice described the role of vulnerability in the MCF: "It is the job of the mentor-coach to really give their teaching fellow the confidence to show their fallibility." However, she also recognized the inherent challenge: "Maybe it is too difficult to let yourself be that vulnerable. ... You can say it but to actually do it, it is asking a lot of people ... especially

when you are trying to get a job.” Laurie argued that the vulnerability of TFs should not be taken lightly: “If they have to grow then they have to bare it all so I feel really grateful that I have been that trusted person for so many of them.” Although many MCs in this study did experience positive relationships, for those who struggled it was often because trust or vulnerability was lacking. Best summed up by Cathy, “If you are a coach and you don’t have that connection and they are afraid of you or afraid of making a mistake then there is a disconnect in that.”

Ultimately, positive MCF relationships are more than friendships. Rather, they are safe, supportive, and trusting professional relationships anchored in mutual respect and reciprocal learning, which facilitate open and honest professional dialogue about teaching and learning.

Meaning.

Seligman (2011) defined his fourth well-being element “meaning” as “belonging to and serving something that you believe is bigger than the self” (p. 17). Service matters to teachers (Parsons *et al.*, 2006; Stevenson, 2019). In this study, participants noted that the opportunity to make “a contribution to my school community and colleagues” (Questionnaire) was the most rewarding aspect of being a MC. Best summed up by Laurie, being an MC was “a really honoured role and it helps me feel like I am doing something greater than just working within my own little classroom.” For many participants, the role offered them a chance to give back for all the support they had received when they started as new teachers. For others like Valerie, it enabled her “to pass along best practices that helps to build sustainability within the school and ultimately within the board.” Improving the quality of teaching in their school was noted by many participants: “We are not sitting behind a desk. It is high stakes. We are interacting and impacting how many humans in our career?” (MC Focus Group). As such, being an MC is a

meaningful role because it gives experienced teachers an opportunity to influence the teaching practice in their schools. Described by Cathy,

Ideally all students get attention and support but when I go into another class and I see the way some of these students are treated, it breaks my heart [...] we are losing and failing those students.[...] so getting [my TF] to recognize that is really important.

For Laurie, being an MC also facilitated the opportunity to spread her educational philosophy and teaching approach with her TF:

We are educators and tasked with teaching the curriculum. As critical educators, we have to question it too [...] It is an activist pedagogy, but I think that helps new teachers understand that questioning is part of being a critical thinking educator which I think we all have to be.

Accomplishment.

The final well-being element in Seligman's (2011) PERMA framework is described as a sense of "accomplishment" or achievement. In this study, accomplishment emerged for MCs in three ways: through the success of their TF, their competence as an effective MC, and their influence on the school culture. For union executives, tying the MCF to successful summative evaluations was problematic: "The mentors do feel like they are having an impact on the new teachers. Whether or not that is measurable is another story. But at least in their minds they feel as though they are getting them through the TIP. That's their goal" (WQTA Focus Group). For some study participants, the MCF impact was obvious and measurable. For example, Winnie noted:

My teaching fellow's classroom management has improved drastically. We are not having any more issues with violence in the classroom so that is really good. The kids in

the class are happy in the end and they are not being sent to the office and there aren't fights breaking out in the class; nobody is getting stabbed. So that's nice.

Accomplishment for Winnie was also related to the fact that her TF no longer wanted to quit teaching and had begun to recognize some of her strengths: "I guess I can really see the differences between who she is now and who she started out as and it is nice to think or hope that I had an influence on that." The influence of the MC on a TF's practice emerged often as a source of accomplishment. As stated by Valerie, "I look at the staff who have gone through the program and I think wow they are exceptional, truly exceptional. Within this program, that is what we breed—isn't that amazing?" The influence of the MCF on a teaching staff was best summed up by Laurie:

The most significant impact for our school community has been the more teachers we have here who have gone through the program, the better the quality of teaching is [...] Talk about the ripple effect. When you see they have been supported and have had best practices modelled and then the whole school starts to change, right? When you know these kids are being taught well and treated well [...] it is kind of neat—it is really humbling in a way.

Tensions emerging from the study

Whereas being an MC contributed to the well-being of all participants in this study, caution must be taken in generalizing this to all MCs across the WQSB, especially considering the survey's 60 percent survey response rate and the voluntary participation of MCs in the focus group and interviews. Although the district leaders attributed the low participation to "end of year busyness" (TIP Team Focus Group), the union executives revealed that "we have [MCs] in

our board who feel that they can't honestly say that I am done with this program. They feel like there will be ramifications from administration or from the board." Thus, caution must be taken that the MC role does not become a panacea for educator well-being in the WQSB. Best summed up in the union focus group, "If you get the right person and pairing and it works—then it is good." Challenging relationships, unsuccessful TFs, and the TF's lack of engagement in the MCF process emerged from this study as having the potential—if left unattended—to contribute to MC stress and increased workload.

For Seligman (2011), the combination of all five PERMA well-being elements ultimately contributes to human flourishing. For Cathy, although she described her relationship with her current TF as "a mild whatever" she still considered being an MC a "positive learning experience." However, she also noted that if her experience had been "really bad," she "would need someone to step in." Another participant recommended that the district leaders might want to develop "a bit of a catch so that if [the relationship] is not working there's another try" (MC Focus Group). Also, the emotional involvement and increased time commitment needed to support struggling TFs was an area of concern raised by participants. Best summed up by Valerie:

It invades a lot of personal time because of the worry. You worry about the children, you worry about the influences of other [colleagues] the decisions [leaders] will make that will impact [your TF], you worry that [your TF] may not make the right decisions, and you worry that it is going to impact you.

The emotional toll of the MCF was not always because of a struggling TF. For Alice, the TF's teaching context needed to be addressed:

I think we just put [TFs] in really difficult positions and expect them to work miracles.

They leave. I would have left [...] For another teaching fellow I coached [working in this same context], it has been really hard on him emotionally and health-wise [...] and I can see it in him, and it is really hard to watch.

Other participants reported that it was both time consuming and emotionally draining when they were working with TFs who were unable or unwilling to make changes to their classroom. For some MCs, like Mary, these challenging MCF experiences resulted in their having to “take a little break from it.” As she stated,

It took up a lot of my time. And I questioned the profession and who is coming out of university [...] it was so negative. It was not a good experience [...] one struggling teacher has a huge impact [...] it was scary for the kids taking that class!

Although Mary had since returned to the MC role at the time of her interview, she credited her supportive administrator and the opportunity to debrief confidentially with other MCs in her school and the TIP team for helping her work through this negative MCF experience.

Finally, tensions also emerged in this study around the need for greater clarity and transparency around the MCF process for teachers not involved in the TIP and how MCs were selected. According to one union executive, “I find at the school level people feel like they are stepping on other people’s toes. They are not holding that [MC] title [...] and you know when you are a more seasoned teacher and you have been overlooked, I know that has definitely caused some ripples at our school” (WQTA Focus Group). Conflict amongst colleagues was also highlighted by other participants. In his interview, Tim recounted the experience of one “jaded” MC in his school. He questioned whether greater clarity around the MC role and more involvement by other teachers in the school might have led his colleague to return to the MC role

and not have felt “blamed” for her struggling and ultimately unsuccessful TF. Union executives also suggested that the MCF simply reproduced the status quo: “You might only be getting one perspective as a new teacher. You are being told this is how you do it and then all of a sudden it is turned into a cookie cutter approach” (WQTA Focus Group). The danger of mentoring and coaching becoming “performative” (Ball, 2003) has been discussed in the research literature (Lofthouse, 2019; Stevenson, 2019). For MCs like Laurie in the WQSB, the role is not about reproducing a “mini me” but can be an enriching leadership opportunity and a chance to role model that experienced teachers are “always learning and changing and growing and working within the system and pushing against it at the same time.” Thus, clarifying the purpose and process of mentoring and coaching across the WQSB remains an area that needs further consideration in order to cultivate MC well-being.

Conclusion and Implications

Overall, this Canadian case study found that being an MC increased experienced teachers’ sense of well-being. Data from interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and TIP documentation were abductively analyzed with and against Seligman’s (2011) PERMA well-being framework to reveal the presence of all five well-being elements: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Ultimately, participants reported that being an MC in the WQSB was an enjoyable and rewarding experience, even when they experienced a challenging MCF relationship. Additionally, participants reported that the MC role helped them to develop positive and trusting collegial relationships, supported their PL and development, and engaged them in challenging and meaningful collaborative work. With teacher stress, burn-out, and attrition a concern for many educational jurisdictions, an induction program

developed to support and retain TFs that is also found to offer powerful benefits to its experienced teachers is worth maintaining, funding, and improving. Thus, these findings have important implications for the case study context, the WQSB. First, clarity around the key terminology and transparency of the selection criteria, roles, and responsibilities of the MC must extend beyond the MCF and across the school district. Second, administrators play a critical role in the selection and pairing of MCs and TFs, providing support during challenging MCF situations, and encouraging flexibility in the role. Third, MCs need meaningful PL activities and support to better understand how and when to use a mentoring or coaching approach in response to the needs of their TF. Fourth, MCs need a supportive MC community to share best practices and discuss MCF challenges. Fifth, the district must be open to critical feedback in order to adapt and improve the MCF process.

Although small in scale and not generalizable across contexts, this study provides a Canadian example of how effective mentoring and coaching embedded into a teacher induction program has the potential to cultivate MC well-being. However, further empirical research is warranted. In particular, future studies might consider other models than Seligman's (2011) PERMA framework to measure MC well-being. Also, future research is needed to explore the influence of the MCF on teacher attrition in the WQSB in relation to the international teacher well-being and attrition literature. In particular, it would be useful to examine how the experience and skill of the MC influences the TF's success and/or decision to stay in the school district. Finally, future research examining the relationship between educator well-being and student achievement is warranted, especially considering the findings from this study that indicate the MC role increases experienced teacher well-being. Specifically, does the increased well-being of MCs influence the well-being of TFs, and what is the overall influence of teacher

well-being on student learning and achievement? For Hargreaves *et al.* (2019), “There is no student wellbeing without teacher wellbeing” (p. 97). Thus, any program that is shown to support teacher well-being and has experienced teachers like Winnie proclaiming, “It is not even a job, it is fun. I love this stuff!” is an important contribution to the field of education and worth celebrating.

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Chapter 6—Manuscript 4

Hollweck, T., Curry, A., Smith, K, Dubeau, M., & Kharyati, T. (2019). Prizes and Imperfections: Examining Teacher Evaluation Within an Induction Program in Western Québec.

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Abstract

Prizes and Imperfections: Examining Teacher Evaluation Within an Induction Program in Western Québec

Teacher quality, teacher evaluation, and student achievement are topics hotly debated worldwide. With educational research linking student achievement to the quality of teaching (Danielson, 2007; Hattie, 2012; Kutsyruba, Godden, Covell, Matheson & Walker, 2016; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Strong, 2011), it is no surprise that there has been an increased focus across international jurisdictions on reforming teacher evaluation policies (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Kyriakides et al., 2006; OECD, 2009). As stated by the OECD (2009): “the effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching is central to the continuous improvement of the effectiveness of teaching in school” (p.3). However, the design and implementation of an effective teacher evaluation system is

complex and contextual with no ‘one size fits all’ model. Comprehensive and coherent systems are needed to “link evaluation, professional development, and collegial learning to support a teaching force that grows in expertise, retains its best teachers, and improves or removes those who cannot teach effectively” (Darling-Hammond, 2013, p.152). With educational researchers promoting a differentiated approach to teacher evaluation for hiring, promotion and tenure (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Danielson, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2013), what this looks like in practice is often lacking in the literature.

The Study

In 2009, the Western Québec School Board (WQSB) introduced a high-stakes (job vs no job) teacher evaluation system as part of its mandatory Teacher Induction Program (TIP). In the district, induction is conceived as a ‘helping mechanism’ (Weva, 1999, p.194), and has three clear aims:

- 1) to retain effective teachers new to the district;
- 2) to provide leadership and professional growth opportunities for veteran staff; and,
- 3) to improve teaching and learning across the district.

Essentially, TIP’s mandate was to develop policy and protocols that not only support teachers new to the district but also provide professional learning and establish a common understanding of what high-quality teaching and learning look like across the district. With no provincially mandated teacher evaluation or induction policies, the WQSB’s TIP was developed at a grassroots level by a small committee of administrators, teachers and district leaders. Whereas Hollweck (2017) provides a more detailed explanation of TIP’s three key pillars: (a) Professional

Learning (PL), (b) the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF), and (c) Teacher Evaluation—this chapter focuses on its most contentious pillar, teacher evaluation.

This chapter used data collected from questionnaires, interviews and focus groups with key stakeholder groups (administrators, district consultants, TIP consultants, Mentor-coaches, Teaching fellows, and union executive) from the first author's doctoral research project to outline the strengths and tensions that surfaced during the examination of the teacher evaluation pillar in the Western Québec School Board's Teacher Induction Program (TIP). In the study, the TIP is conceptualized as a patchwork quilt, with teacher evaluation being just one of the many fabric blocks. However, findings from the qualitative case study highlighted the key influence teacher evaluation has had on the TIP quilt's overall pattern leading to many prizes along with a few imperfections.

Towards a Shared Understanding of Key Teacher Evaluation Terms

Fundamental to any effective teacher evaluation system is a shared understanding of its key terms. In the educational literature, teacher quality, teaching quality and teacher effectiveness are often ill-defined, used interchangeably, or have conflicting or conflated interpretations that vary according to perspective, epistemology, and interests (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Goe et al., 2008; Hattie, 2012; Hess & McShane, 2014). In the WQSB, and in this chapter, the term *teacher quality* is used and is most closely aligned with Strong's (2011) general-purpose working definition: “[t]he set of teacher qualifications, knowledge, experience, personal attributes, and pedagogical practices that result in positive student outcomes” (p.52). Measuring teacher quality in the district involves a multi-modal approach that combines observation of practice, evidence of student learning, and evidence of professional contributions.

Before these methods are outlined in more detail, it is important to consider the practical realities and context of the district that have shaped its policies and procedures.

A Unique Canadian Context

As is the case in many Canadian school districts, the WQSB's evaluation system is framed by both its context and provincial guidelines. In order to better understand the district's assessment policies, practices and procedures, they must be understood and interpreted within the cultural, social, educational, philosophical and political conditions in which they occur (Fransson, 2010; Wang et al., 2008). The WQSB is a member of Québec's English School Network. This network links nine English language school districts across the province and is significantly smaller than its French language counterpart. The WQSB is comprised of twenty-five diverse schools that include rural, suburban and urban, elementary (K-6), secondary (7-11), and multi-grade (K-11) contexts. Although large geographically, the most recent data (WQSB, 2018a) indicates the district has only 7298 students, 450 teaching staff, 22 principals and 8 vice-principals. Whereas the largest urban school in Gatineau, Québec has 1071 students, 75 teachers and 3 administrators, the smallest school in the district is a rural elementary school with 41 students, 3.5 teachers and a 0.3 part-time administrator. The diversity and distance among schools makes professional learning activities and teacher collaboration challenging in the district. Historically, the WQSB has also struggled to attract, hire and retain teachers, especially in its rural and northern schools. A number of factors contribute to the reality that every year 20% of the WQSB's teaching staff is within their first two years of teaching in the district (ABEE 2009; Karsenti and Collin 2013; Sauvé 2012).

Teacher attrition is a major concern for teaching quality (Ingersoll 2011; Karsenti et al. 2008; Kutsyuruba and Walker 2017). In Québec, the estimated attrition rate is 15-20% (Fournier

& Marzouk, 2008; Gingras & Mukamurera, 2008; Mukamurera, Bourque & Gingras, 2008; Mukamurera & al, 2013), with the WQSB experiencing some of the highest teacher attrition rates in the province. As Sharon Feiman-Nemser (2003) highlights, some beginning teachers may be “clinging to practices and attitudes that help them survive but do not serve the education needs of students” (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, p.27). As such, the focus of teacher evaluation within an induction context should be on both quality assurance as well as sustaining and improving the practice of novice teachers. It was clearly evident in the analysis of data collected through focus groups with the WQSB district leaders and consultants that teacher attrition was not seen as a reason to sacrifice teacher quality. Rather, the district aimed to find a balance in the evaluation system between building new teacher competence and weeding out poor performers at the beginning of their career.

Teacher Evaluation and Induction in the WQSB

Ultimately, the WQSB evaluation system was designed based on the belief that the overall quality of practice in the district would be raised by developing clear teaching standards that could be used by all teachers, regardless of experience or school context, and by making the tenure process rigorous, transparent, and consistent across the district. As Danielson and McGreal (2000) note, it is “important to recognize the theoretical underpinnings of any description of teaching and to know the assumptions about content and learning theory on which it is based” (p.34). In the province of Québec, although it is the responsibility of the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (MEES) to establish the aims and directives for the education system, the province is anchored in a highly decentralized model whereby individual school boards and schools are responsible for the hiring, evaluation and professional learning of teachers.

In 2008, a small volunteer committee of WQSB administrators, teachers and consultants were tasked with a challenging mandate to:

- 1) develop a coherent definition of what good teaching looked like in the district;
- 2) establish a standard for acceptable performance; and,
- 3) provide techniques and procedures to assess the quality of teaching.

Considering the composition of the district and the importance of hiring, supporting, and retaining highly effective teachers (MEQ 2003), the committee highlighted the need to clarify and improve the district's probationary period. Beginning with an examination of the teacher evaluation and professional learning procedures currently in place across the district, the committee found an inconsistent understanding of teacher quality across schools, a lack of coherence and consistency around professional learning, and little accountability in terms of teacher supervision and evaluation. These results supported Danielson's (2001) argument that "[m]ost existing systems of teacher evaluation are taken seriously by neither teachers nor administrators. They are based on outmoded criteria, observations are conducted on the run by poorly trained evaluators who are not sure what they should be looking for, and virtually all teachers are rated at the top of whatever scale is used" (p.12). Thus, considering the district's context, the committee decided to focus on teacher evaluation during teacher induction that promoted: (a) quality assurance and (b) professional growth. Rather than view these goals as incompatible and competing, they are viewed as essential, mutually supportive, and inextricably intertwined elements that support continuous improvement in the total evaluation process (Stronge, 1995; Tuytens & Devos, 2014). As Darling-Hammond (2013) notes, "[s]uch a system should enhance teacher learning and skill, while at the same time ensuring that teachers who are retained and tenured can effectively support student learning throughout their careers" (p.3).

Essential to effective teacher evaluation systems is the development of clear research-based teaching standards that are sophisticated enough to assess teacher quality across the continuum of development, from novice to expert (Danielson, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Marshall, 2011; Marzano, Fontier & Livingston, 2011; Strong, 2011). Whereas this chapter focuses primarily on how the standards are used in the evaluation of probationary teachers, the district has plans to use these standards in all teacher evaluation situations, including growth-oriented performance discussions with tenured teachers. The first step in this process was to develop standards that reflected the district context and priorities, followed by clearly communicating and using these standards during teacher induction, in order to gather feedback for improvement. In developing its teaching standards, the WQSB turned to existing provincial documents for guidance.

In 2001, the Québec Ministry released its guidelines for teacher training built on the concept of ‘professionalization,’ which included a focus on the development and consolidation of twelve *Core Professional Competencies for the Teaching Profession* (MEQ, 2001). These same twelve professional competencies framed the Ministry’s teacher probation document for student teachers released in 2006, which defined competency as “the ability to *act effectively or respond appropriately* and involves a variety of elements to be evaluated: such as knowledge, experience, attitudes, skills, resources, etc” (p.24). The district decided it made sense to use these same twelve teacher competencies as a frame to develop their teaching standards.

Like many of the established frameworks for effective teaching (such as Danielson, 2007 and Marzano et al., 2011), the Ministry’s professional competencies reference broad teaching categories, such as planning, assessment, and classroom environment. They also include references to the work teachers perform outside of the classroom, such as communicating and

collaborating with parents and staff. In this evaluation system, it is the responsibility of the school administrator to use three methods to gather data—meeting, observation, and portfolio—to make a professional judgement for the teacher’s summative report. Even though the Ministry provides guidelines and sample summative report templates, in a decentralized model, it is up to schools and districts to design their own evaluation and tenure process.

In the WQSB, the decision was made that the Teacher Induction Program would be made mandatory for all *teaching fellows* or teachers new to the district, regardless of teaching experience and pre-service training. Only after two successful years in TIP, would teaching fellows be able to join the ‘priority of employment’ list and be eligible for tenure. Whereas the supervision and evaluation of teachers remains the responsibility of school administrators, the WQSB’s TIP team⁷ is responsible for developing and refining the evaluation protocols at a district level, which currently includes formal classroom observations and the submission of an ongoing ‘Reflective Record’ every term. Support is offered in the first year of TIP through district-led professional learning and the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF). The MCF pairs each teaching fellow with a non-evaluative administrator-selected mentor–coach, who most often is a full-time teacher within their school. In the second year of the TIP, teaching fellows no longer have a mentor–coach but are still offered district-led professional learning opportunities. The evaluation methods are the same for both years and require the administrator to complete a summative report based on classroom observation and the Reflective Record. We now present our research findings and discussion in relation to each of these methods.

⁷ The TIP team consists of two part-time teacher consultants (75% and 50%) and is overseen by the Director of Human Resources and the Director General.

Classroom Observation In the WQSB: Findings and Discussion

Evaluation and supervision have long been linked to classroom observation. As noted in the literature, frequent and skilled standards-based classroom observations with feedback can lead to student achievement gains (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Although observations are clearly a practical and valuable activity for collecting formal data about teacher performance, they should not be *the* evaluation. In the WQSB, classroom observations are presented in the TIP Handbook as a rich opportunity for administrators to collect data about a teacher, and to offer feedback for growth based on that data. They are only conceived as *one piece of evidence* for the summative report. It is expected that each teaching fellow will have at least one formal classroom observation per term by their administrator and that the data collected will be synthesized and analyzed alongside other evaluative information gathered throughout the year.

In spite of having a clear timeline in the Handbook, our research data showed “how different the program runs in different schools.” Whereas some teaching fellows reported multiple formal and informal observations and feedback from their administrator, others reported having only one formal observation a year, usually the one organized by the TIP team. They also reported that they received little to no feedback from their administrator throughout the year. As stated by one teaching fellow, “my administration came once because I asked for it.” Stakeholders were clear that this “shouldn’t be happening” and a few noted that they “would like to see more of an accountability piece for principals.”

Given the complex realities of classroom teaching, research shows high-stakes evaluation should never be based on a single classroom observation as multiple observations contribute to the stability of observation results (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Marshall, 2013; Strong, 2011;

Whitehurst, Chingos & Lindquist, 2015). In the words of one mentor-coach, “the formal observation/evaluation is one moment in time. The observations throughout the year were more useful and provide a better picture of the teacher day to day”. Ultimately, it is consistent, reliable and ongoing observations with meaningful feedback given by skilled observers that is needed in the district. As noted by Matthew, a mentor-coach: “If things have gone as they should in the program, you should get to your observation and should not be surprised.”

In the WQSB, the formal evaluation protocol includes: (a) a preconference; (b) an observation using the district-developed Professional Rubric for the Observation of (PRO) Teaching Tool, which is a grassroots document based on Québec’s 12 Core Professional Competencies; and, (c) a post-conference debrief session with structured feedback about what is working well in the classroom and what could be improved. As the district’s understanding of effective and meaningful feedback has developed, observer comments have been refined. Now, value statements are accompanied by an example, anecdote, illustration, or description and areas for improvement are offered in the form of a question.

In spite of having clearly defined procedures and exemplars, one of the barriers most often reported on the WQSB administrator questionnaire was not having enough time to fulfil the evaluation process. Administrators also requested more intensive support for evaluation and supervision, especially considering the province of Québec does not have a mandated principal certification process that might address these skills. In response, the district has focused recent administrator professional learning sessions on improving classroom observation and feedback sessions.

In an effort to support administrators with the formal evaluation protocol and in using the PRO Teaching Tool two members of the TIP team join administration in one of the teaching

fellow's yearly formal observations. The current format and structure for this TIP formal observation involves the following six components:

- 1) Teaching fellows are informed via email at the start of the month in which the TIP observation will take place and they are advised that they will receive a 24-48 hour 'heads-up' communication from a TIP consultant.
- 2) Classroom observations last 20-30 minutes
- 3) The observers meet to prepare for the debrief session, using the Professional Rubric for the Observation of (PRO) Teaching Tool to guide dialogue and feedback.
- 4) The observation team has a debrief with the teaching fellow who is provided with the opportunity to reflect on their class. The team then shares feedback (3 what went wells, 3 things to consider in the form of a question).
- 5) Written feedback from the debrief is sent to the teacher (provided by a TIP consultant) usually within 48 hours.
- 6) When an observation is deemed unsuccessful, a support plan is put in place and there is a second TIP observation later in the year.

As evidenced in our research data, there is considerable debate in the district around the use of announced versus unannounced TIP visits, as well as how much time is considered reasonable to prepare teachers for the formal TIP observation. Whereas some teaching fellows found "not knowing when I was going to be observed added to the stress level," others would have preferred having no advance notice. On this subject, the research literature is inconclusive. There are clear proponents of announced formal observations (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Stiggins, 2014) and as Danielson and McGreal (2000) note "[c]ontrary to popular belief, unannounced visits do not provide more accurate pictures of teaching than do announced visits" (p.85). On the other hand,

critics like Kim Marshall (2013) argue that “an evaluation process that relies on announced visits is inaccurate, dishonest, and ineffective” (p.30). In fact, Marshall argues that “the best way to make a fair appraisal of classroom performance—and to give teachers interim feedback as the year progresses—is through frequent, unannounced mini-observations (ten per teacher per year) with face-to-face follow-up conversations on each visit within twenty-four hours” (p. 145). In the WQSB, although it was generally felt that unannounced visits would add to teaching fellow’s anxiety, there was a real concern raised that advance notice led to the preparation of showcase lessons of the ‘dog-and-pony show’ variety (Marshall, 2013). This is clear in the comments made by this teaching fellow: “I thought it was great that new teachers are notified in advance of formal observations, because this gives us a chance to plan something that demonstrates our strengths.”

It is only natural that teachers would want to plan lessons to showcase their best practice, but it makes the feedback session less applicable and meaningful for their ‘everyday’ lesson. For now, the district has opted for announced visits for the formal TIP observation with some advance notice for teachers (24 hours). Administrators are encouraged to explore other observation processes (such as learning walks, instructional rounds, mini-observations, etc.) that may work better as additional ways to gather observation data.

The participation of two TIP team members along with the administrator in one formal classroom observation each year emerged from the research data as the most contentious element of the WQSB’s teacher evaluation system. In support, system leaders argued that the triad approach addressed inter-rater reliability concerns, ensured consistency across the district, and provided quality control for the tenure process. This view is supported by research (Murphy, 2013; Whitehurst, Chingos & Lindquist, 2015) that shows multiple observations conducted by

different individuals can increase reliability and help benchmark standards. TIP consultants also noted that being involved in the formal observations offered them the opportunity to tailor professional learning for teaching fellows and mentor-coaches. District leaders also highlighted that it provided much needed support and training for administrators, a view supported by administrators who strongly supported continuing the TIP formal observation process. In the words of one administrator: “I feel confident and supported in the Evaluation Process of this program, and believe it helps me both improve professionally and assess new teachers to our school.”

Conversely, critics of TIP’s involvement in the formal observation process argued that since the external observers were not located at the school site, they weren’t familiar with all the varied aspects of a teacher’s performance and therefore not in a position to judge it. A majority of teaching fellows reported that the formal observations was “overly stressful,” and participants reported that it led to showcase lessons, made teachers “stressed about the reaction [...] students were going to have,” and that the 20-minute time-frame was “not an accurate depiction of what class is like.” Multiple stakeholders also noted that the involvement of district leaders, especially the Director General or the Director of Human Resources, unnecessarily added to teaching fellows’ anxiety. In an effort to address the stress, reduce lesson showcasing, and increase transparency, in 2015 mentor-coaches were invited to participate in the formal observation process in a supportive but non-evaluative role. Including non-evaluative mentor-coaches in part of the process “as support to the fellow and to shed light on any misconceptions or discrepancies noted by the evaluation team” was well received by all research participants. Considering “lines could easily be blurred,” as one administrator notes, “if the expectation is clearly laid out and the fellow understands why the mentor-coach is there (as support) I don’t see

this being an issue.” For mentor–coaches, being part of the debrief process is “very powerful” because “in the snapshot you just took, I can show you the big picture.” However, it was also made clear by many participants that teaching fellows “should be able to decide whether they would like their mentor–coach to be involved in the evaluation process” since much depends on the relationship established in the fellowship.

No matter how well-intentioned and clearly communicated by the district that the TIP formal observations were only one part of the evaluation process, most of the criticism boiled down to how much trust teaching fellows had that stakeholders would not use the snapshot visit for a high-stakes tenure decision. In the words of one teaching fellow:

It sometimes feels as though your whole teaching career depends on a 20-minute observation when we are supposed to be lifelong learners. Does this observation truly reflect a supportive and encouraging system or does it encourage an elimination program?

It is important to note that all respondents on the teaching fellow questionnaire reported that although stressful, the formal TIP observation was valuable and helped them grow in their teaching practice. What emerged in the focus groups was that in schools where administrators completed multiple classroom observations and provided meaningful feedback and support, trust in the process was higher. Presently, TIP’s involvement in the evaluation process continues to be debated in the district, as are ways to improve administrator buy-in on multiple observations and giving effective feedback based on the district-developed Professional Rubric for the Observation of (PRO) Teaching Tool.

In 2008, the WQSB developed the PRO Teaching Tool as a means to make the classroom observation process more consistent and transparent across the district. Based on the Ministry’s 12 Core Professional Competencies, only the first eight competencies are included on the tool as

they refer directly to classroom practice. Developed by a team of district leaders, consultants, and administrators, the PRO Teaching Tool breaks down each competency into *possible* observable elements and includes values important to the district, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Tribes TLC, and Instructional Intelligence (II) innovations introduced through a ten-year partnership with Dr. Barrie Bennett (OISE/UT) from 2000-2010 (Hollweck, 2008). The PRO Teaching Tool and the observation protocol were first piloted in the classrooms of ‘master’ teachers and then introduced formally in the TIP in 2009. Although no form can capture all the subtleties around high-quality teaching, the PRO Teaching Tool continues to evolve based on stakeholder feedback and ongoing professional learning. Most recently, key questions and ‘look-fors’ focused on clear, curriculum-based learning intentions, appropriate learning activities, and success criteria were added. Although the PRO Teaching Tool is often first perceived as a checklist, it is intended to set standards for high-quality teaching in the district. In essence, its goal is, as Kim Marshall (2013) states, “to foster an honest, open, and pedagogically sophisticated dialogue between principals and teachers” (p.24).

One of the major changes to the PRO Teaching Tool in recent years has been the removal of rating scales that were initially included to rank observed lessons on a continuum from ‘unsatisfactory’ to ‘outstanding’. Influenced by a learning partnership with Ravens Wood school in England, lessons were given an overall rank based on the average of the eight competencies that were each scored from 0-1. The overall rank was then used by administrators as part of their summative evaluation and shared with teaching fellows in the post-conference debrief. Not surprisingly, ranking lessons in a way similar to England’s Ofsted process had many critics, both internal and external. Although some teaching fellows (usually those who did well) reported they “like knowing that they’re considered more than successful or unsuccessful,” administrators

and mentor–coaches noted that the lesson ranking often overshadowed the meaningful descriptive feedback provided or made teaching fellows defensive. As stated by one administrator, “More important than the rating scale are the points for improvement which are suggested at each feedback session. A rating scale may discourage some and stunt the growth of others.”

Miscommunication in the district around the meaning of the ranking also emerged from the research data. Whereas the ranking referred to the quality of *teaching* observed in lesson, it was often misconstrued as a rank on the overall quality of the *teacher* and that this rank would be used on the summative evaluation. This view is evident in the comments of this second-year teaching fellow who reported “in 20 minutes they [the observers] believe they know who you are as a teacher.” In general, the research literature does not support the use of rating scales for lesson observations. As noted by Danielson and McGreal (2000), their use is problematic with difficulties revolving “around their susceptibility to rater bias, the halo effect [the impression made in one area influencing opinion in another], and leniency, as well as serious questions about validity [referring to the extent to which the instrument measures what it professes to measure]” (p.97). Although valid and research-based scaling instruments have been developed using behaviorally anchored rating scales (i.e. BARS found in Danielson’s Framework, 2007), inter-rater reliability remains a concern for critics and requires extensive training. Also raised in the research literature and highlighted in the WQSB data is the concern that beginning teachers were being ranked using the same scale as their more experienced and skilled colleagues. If it is understood that novice teachers are in the process of building expertise, then a ‘satisfactory’ rank should be appropriate and expected. However, this was not always communicated clearly and as one mentor–coach noted “you are competing with everyone who is new and you are trying to

compare yourself to people who have been doing this for fifteen years.” As such, teaching fellows were often disappointed and discouraged by their lower ranks, which hindered their openness to the feedback for growth and ongoing professional learning. In 2016 the TIP team made the decision to remove the rating scale results from the lesson debrief. Instead lessons were reported as being either successful or unsuccessful, a move strongly supported by a majority of research participants. Importantly, for all unsuccessful lessons a support plan is put in place and a second TIP observation is scheduled for later in the year.

Reflective Records In the WQSB: Findings and Discussion

Research is clear that teachers should be active and reflective participants in a comprehensive evaluation system (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Marshall, 2011; Stiggins, 2014). In the WQSB, the Reflective Record was developed for teaching fellows to not only have an ongoing voice in the evaluation process, but also to provide an opportunity to demonstrate professional growth through personalized goal setting. Each term teaching fellows must complete three components as outlined on the Reflective Record template: (a) set two goals from any of the twelve Core Professional Competencies, (b) provide evidence of professional learning and practice anchored in these goals, and (c) reflect on how their work on these goals has influenced student learning. Pivotal to this process is a termly meeting with their administrator to discuss their goals, progress and influence on student learning. Introduced in 2016, the Reflective Record replaced the two previous evaluation methods used in the district since 2009: The Professional Growth Portfolio (PGP) and individual meetings. In order to better understand the reimagined Reflective Record, it is important to outline how the PGP and individual meetings were first conceptualized and experienced in the district.

The Professional Growth Portfolio (PGP) was designed based on the Ministry (MELS, 2006) guidelines:

An organized file of written work, achievements and reflections that illustrate the teacher's progress. The contents, arranged in chronological order and according to different contexts, document aspects related to the teaching profession and to the expected professional competencies...The portfolio illustrates the applicant's progress (strengths, weaknesses and achievements) (p.25).

Often championed in the early teacher evaluation research literature (Burke, 1997; Dietz, 1998; Millham & Darling-Hammond, 1990), the use of portfolios for professional learning and as a professional development event in itself has "extraordinary potential" (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Compared to classroom observations, portfolios have the capacity to present a more authentic view of teaching and learning over time and thus offer a more complete portrait of how teachers think and act. If done well, portfolios can also offer probationary teachers a structure and process for documenting and reflecting on their practice, which is at the heart of professional learning. In the WQSB, the PGP was submitted at the end of the year to the administrator to be included in the summative evaluation process and then to the TIP team for feedback. Although the PGP's emphasis on reflection and growth was strongly supported in the district, the development of a portfolio had many critics. As stated by one mentor-coach:

The portfolio is a strong component of the program, but I feel like new teachers feel pressured to put a lot of time and effort into making it look good rather than just presenting evidence of growth, even if that's not really the point and they keep being told that by the TIP leaders. I'm not sure how to get around that...(Questionnaire)

Rather than being a positive opportunity for teaching fellows to be involved in the evaluation process, the “project of a portfolio” became a “heavy burden” for many teaching fellows and as one mentor–coach reported, “it would mean a lot more to newbies if admin did look at it and take time to meet with them.” Even administrators who strongly supported the continuation of PGP as “a very useful tool in the professional growth and evaluation process,” noted that it was “a daunting exercise for teaching fellows and an area that may need more support.” Concerns about reliability were also raised in the district due to a lack of consistency and clarity about expectations and the absence of a standardized rubric to guide the PGP scoring. As stated by one mentor–coach, “the TIP team and the administrator need to be on the same page for the expectations of the growth portfolio.” In the end, even though the PGP was conceptualized as an ongoing, growth-oriented process that was supposed to represent the ‘natural harvest’ of teachers’ work (Danielson & McGreal 2000), in practice it became a “make-work project” that added an extra burden to the already heavy workload of a beginning teacher. The criticisms levied against the PGP by all stakeholders were best summed up by this mentor–coach:

I have mixed feelings on the portfolio. I think the word 'portfolio' has become a bit poisoned and evokes images of perfectly manicured binders being carried by soon-to-graduate education students. I think this portion of the program needs a serious re-brand. I'm not opposed to it in theory; I think that something that demonstrates growth is important, but I think that a full makeover and re-brand is required to move away from something that has a pretty heavy "hoop to jump through" stigma attached to it.

(Questionnaire)

Thus, in an effort to ‘re-brand,’ the district introduced the Reflective Record to the WQSB evaluation process aiming to retain and streamline the most useful and meaningful elements of

the PGP and embed regular individual meetings with administration. Stakeholder perspective around the Reflective Record is not yet available but will be used by the TIP team to inform future direction and practice.

Concluding Thoughts: Prizes and Imperfections

In the discussion of the design and implementation of the WQSB's comprehensive evaluation process during teacher induction, it is important to highlight the district's effort to be a learning organization with a clear commitment to the highest quality of teaching and learning (WQSB 2018a). Considering the district's unique context and the significant number of early career teachers, a robust and structured teacher induction program focused on quality assurance and professional learning is essential. With no clear pattern available for teacher induction or evaluation in the province of Québec, this chapter reports on how one district stitched a rigorous teacher evaluation system into the TIP patchwork quilt. In the ten years since its introduction, there have been many strengths and prizes that should be recognized, especially the increased understanding and consistency of how teacher quality is defined and measured across the district.

However, many imperfections and tensions have also surfaced from the research data. In particular, more work needs to be done to improve the classroom observation process and to support administrators. The TIP team's continued involvement in the formal observation process will also need to be considered. District leaders will have to collect feedback from key stakeholders about the Reflective Record and continue to explore meaningful and reasonable ways for teachers to contribute to their own evaluation process. Clarity around expectations and how the Reflective Record is to be used in the summative report will need to be addressed.

Finally, the district still needs to look at how to bring student achievement growth into the evaluation process in, as Rick Stiggins (2014) calls “a defensible way.”

In the end, the WQSB’s teacher evaluation system remains an ever-evolving process that has a large influence on the overall pattern of the TIP quilt. In fact, the majority of stakeholders support the district’s rigorous evaluation process for new teachers and credit it for contributing to a more professional atmosphere across the district. And this gets at the heart of what comprehensive teacher evaluation is all about. As stated by Thomas Toch and Robert Rothman (2008), the ultimate goal is to:

make public school teaching more attractive to the sort of talent that the occupation has struggled to recruit and retain. Capable people want to work in environments where they sense they matter...Comprehensive evaluation systems send a message that teachers are professionals doing important work” (p.13).

In a district that has struggled with teacher retention and is constantly seeking to improve, if the design and implementation of a coherent, high-quality system for teacher evaluation during teacher induction can stimulate continuous professional learning and improve student success there is no more useful or necessary work.

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Chapter 7—Connected Threads

There are many reasons for making a quilt and many events in the course of a lifetime that are deserving. When you handle these pieces, you remember, and this cloth weaves the threads of your life with the lives of others.

Ellis, 2012, p. 6

Introduction

Student learning and achievement is at the core of any educational system. Across the international educational literature, it has become widely accepted that the quality of the teacher has the biggest influence on instructional quality and student achievement (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Hattie, 2012; OECD, 2019). As such, ways to support teacher professional learning and development in an effort to improve classroom practice has been the key focus of many systemic change initiatives. Concomitantly, the issue of teacher attrition, especially in early career teachers, has also emerged as a major challenge for many international and national jurisdictions (OECD, 2019).

For many scholars, induction and mentoring are viewed as an important and integral part of the continuum of teacher education and development and essential for the retention of teachers (e.g. Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2005; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ingersoll & Strong,

2011). Induction provisions vary internationally, nationally, and even amongst school districts within the province of Québec (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006; Howe, 2006; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2017; Villani, 2002). The significant disparity among programs has led to a mixed review of whether these structures have positive impacts on teachers' pedagogical practices and improve student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al, 1999; Howe, 2006; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). As stated by Kutsyuruba et al (2017):

While we might examine the structures and systems in place to successfully induct teachers into the profession and retain them, it is important to consider how these structures and systems have been received and how their use was perceived by the very individuals they were designed to serve (p.46).

A significant scholarship base examines ways to support, develop, and retain teachers throughout their professional career. However, teacher induction, mentoring and coaching, and teacher evaluation are concepts that are understood and practiced in a variety of ways across international and Canadian jurisdictions (Moir & Bloom, 2003; Campbell et al, 2016; Kutsyuruba et al, 2017; Kutsyuruba and Walker, 2017). Thus, there is a clear call in the literature for more educational studies to examine these practices in more detail and to clarify how the terms mentoring and coaching are understood and practiced (Cullingford, 2006; Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Fletcher, 2012; Ganser, 2006; Mullen, 2012). There has also been a need raised for more studies which bring multiple perspectives of school stakeholders together to present a more robust picture of how individuals experience and interact with these practices (Netolicky, 2016). In particular, considering the dearth of research examining the impact of the mentor-coach role on experienced teachers, a study focused on the experience of teachers who take up a mentor-coach role is warranted (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Ganser, 2006). Finally, with

coaching also growing in popularity as a way to support teacher professional learning and development, studies that provide insight into what happens in practice are also considered an asset to the educational community. Ultimately, this doctoral project aimed to respond to these needs. Specifically, my qualitative case study examined the lived experience of mentor-coaches and how the WQSB stakeholders perceived the impact of the TIP.

As noted earlier in the dissertation, the WQSB's TIP is best understood and interpreted within its cultural, social, educational, philosophical and political conditions (Fransson, 2010; Wang et al, 2008). Like many school districts, the WQSB is framed by its context (its quilt back) and has numerous influences, initiatives, commitments, district partners, and stakeholders that inform design, development and implementation of its induction program. In this study, as a researcher, I was primarily interested in how the mentor-coach role influenced experienced teachers' professional learning and development, classroom practice, and well-being. Identifying as a 'pracademic,' and retaining my professional position as co-coordinator for the TIP during most of my doctoral journey, I wanted my study findings to not only add to the scholarly discussion, but also for the TIP to continue to grow, evolve and improve in the WQSB. In this chapter, I will present my study's key findings as they relate to my two guiding research questions. I will then connect the threads that run between each manuscript in this patchwork quilt and highlight the five key themes that emerged in this project: the importance and role of clarity, adaptability, relationships, trust, and power. First, however, I will begin this chapter with a critical reflection on my pracademic positionality and highlight some of the study's limitations.

Positionality and lessons learned

Whilst this qualitative case study aimed to stitch together a number of different concepts and stakeholder perspectives in relation to the WQSB's TIP, it is important to remember that as the project's quilter my own hand was never far removed from the connecting threads. Looking back over the included manuscripts, I can't help but notice its many imperfections and areas of struggle. In particular, I recognize that throughout this doctoral journey, my thinking around mentoring and coaching has continued to evolve and change. In fact, I credit this project for this growth. That said, whereas my first published manuscript (Chapter 2) captures earlier thinking, I provide a more developed understanding in these final chapters. I also have come to terms with the many influences that helped shape each fabric block or manuscript in this quilt. This final product was not only influenced by the study's research questions and design, but also by the decisions I made regarding publication type and topic, editor and reviewer suggestions, required word counts, co-authors' contribution, and deadlines. All that has been going on in the background can never fully be stitched into these pages.

Another area of challenge for me as a quilter was how to reconcile the two goals that I had for this research project. The first goal emerged from my positionality as a scholar and how to capture the teacher induction experience of a small English language school district using a qualitative case study design. The second goal was from my practitioner position and focused on how to use the study's findings to guide the future structure and practice of professional learning and development, mentoring and coaching, and teacher evaluation in the WQSB. These twin desires to make my research both scholarly and practical were frequently at odds and woven into every quilting decision made. In the end, I came to realize that I would have to focus on finding a way to make my research meaningful and useful for me, its quilter. As stated by Finn Dodd,

the lead character in the film adaptation of Whitney Otto's (1991) novel, *How to Make an American Quilt*:

You have to choose your combinations careful. The right choices will enhance your quilt. The wrong choices will dull the colors and hide their original beauty. There are no rules you can follow. You have to go by instinct and you have to be brave (Pillsbury, Sanford & Moorhouse, 1995).

In this quilting project, I had to trust my instincts and be brave in my choices.

I have learned many critical lessons from this quilting experience. First, one of the biggest lessons I learned was how important it was to seek out alternative perspectives during the case study's data collection phase. Considering my connection to the TIP as its designer and coordinator, this was particularly important in this project. Also, I was not able to gather the perspective of *all* TIP participants in this study. Specifically, only 25 of 42 mentor-coaches, 26 of 51 Year 1 teaching fellows, 13 of 33 Year 2 teaching fellows, and 21 of 28 administrators returned completed questionnaires for this study. Although the majority of respondents were positive about the TIP, I recognized that these responses were not a full representation of the different stakeholder perspectives. To help me better understand the different perspectives, I am especially grateful to the WQTA union executives who willingly participated in the study. Not only did they provide the project with an alternative view point but they also alerted me to the concern that some mentor-coaches and teaching fellows reported that they "didn't feel like they could give critical and anonymous feedback regarding the program" (WQTA focus group). Through their contribution I was able to better understand some of the criticisms being levied against the TIP, which ultimately enhanced this project.

The second key lesson that I learned as a novice quilter was how important planning and tracing the overall quilt design was before beginning to cut and sew. In particular, with my supervisor's support, from the beginning of this project I had a clear picture of my thesis-by-article structure, my case study design, and the guiding quilt metaphor. This clearly defined structure was instrumental when it came to make decisions on how I was going to piece together the over five hundred pages of qualitative data into the different quilt blocks. Although I agree with Merriam (1998) that the writing stage is a critical part of the analysis process, having a clear research design and structure is imperative for novice quilters. Although I chose a more freeform quilting approach rather than following one specific case study design, I also have come to realize how important it was to continually return to the work of the case study masters during the quilting process (Yin, 2014; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005).

Although there were many times during this quilting process that I felt I should have followed a more traditional research design and format, I also realize that my uncertainty as a novice quilter is an important part of the overall doctoral learning experience. Ultimately, we learn from the mistakes we make. For example, a more thorough exploration of how to design effective questionnaires might have tipped me off to the importance of having similarly worded questions across stakeholder groups in order to better facilitate the analysis process. Similarly, if given the chance, I would have reworked my focus group protocol to ensure that there were key questions to be answered by all stakeholder groups, especially in relation to my guiding research questions. In the end, I have no regrets about the qualitative research design and methods that I selected for this patchwork quilt. As it turns out, my pragmatic and creative approach in this doctoral project is also common in modern quilters. In fact, this phenomenon is described by the

quilting authority and collector, Roderick Kiracofe (2018) in his most recent book,

Unconventional & Unexpected: American Quilts Below the Radar 1950-2000:

In some quilts we can surmise that the maker started out with a traditional pattern and, for whatever reason, upended the route and swerved down a different path...she either had a different vision of what her quilt ought to look like or she simply allowed the creation to flow through her by happy accident (Introduction).

The third key lesson that I have learned from this research project was how important and necessary it is for qualitative quilters to critically reflect on the ways in which their positionality, epistemology, and methodology is stitched into the research process. Since the very beginning of my doctoral journey I have been rumbling with my insider–outsider positionality and the ways in which my professional practitioner role influences my study’s credibility, trustworthiness, reliability, and ethics. Although there are definitely times that I regret taking six years to finish this quilting project, I also recognize that over the past year I was finally able to conceptualize my pracademic positionality. For me, this was an essential part of my quilting process and I credit my online professional community for introducing me to the ‘pracademic’ term. From this experience, I also learned the value in building professional and scholarly communities. It is important to not only read and think on one’s own, but also to engage in dialogue with the experts in my field.

During this project, I have learned to be both brave and vulnerable. In sharing my work publicly, I have received critical and constructive feedback from international experts in my field that have enhanced my final quilt design. Specifically, my visual representation of mentoring and coaching during teacher induction introduced in Chapter Two was informed by discussions I had with John Campbell (GCI), Jim Knight (ICG), Rachel Lofthouse (Leeds Beckett), Chris

Munro (GCI), Megan Tschannen-Moran (College of William and Mary) and Christian van Nieuwerburgh (University of East London). Also, I credit Andy Hargreaves (Boston College) and Lawrence Susskind (MIT) for helping me think through my pracademic circle of inquiry conceptualization in Chapter Three. For a novice quilter to hear that I “have moved the discussion of the Circle of Engagement to a new level” (Lawrence Susskind, personal communication, June 19, 2019) was a source of encouragement. The suggestions for improvement also make the work stronger. By including the above experts in this chapter is not simply an exercise in name-dropping, but to acknowledge the role my learning community has played in the background of this quilt. For me, this finished product is truly a community textile that extends even beyond the WQSB. Also, as a social constructivist, I believe learning is relational and collective. I only wish I had made the effort to reach out to the Wenger-Trayners for their feedback on how I have come to understand their landscapes of practice theory. Perhaps this effort will find its way in a future quilting project.

The final lesson I have learned in this quilting project is that the qualitative research process is dynamic, iterative, and ongoing. As a quilter, one of the hardest parts in making this patchwork quilt has been letting go of certain fabric pieces, interesting quotes and emerging ideas that didn't find their way into this dissertation. Just as my own understanding has been evolving, research into teacher induction, teacher professional learning and development, mentoring and coaching, and teacher evaluation is also ongoing and evolving. In fact, one of my biggest struggles during this project was how to stay abreast of current empirical, professional, and theoretical literature and how to stitch this into this final product. At many points during the quilting process I have found myself questioning whether I have been comprehensive and detailed enough. I have even wished that I had crafted different questions or had the chance to

rewrite published manuscripts. Ultimately, this finished patchwork quilt only captures a part of the TIP story and there remain so many other stories left to tell. What remains a comfort is that what has been left out of this quilt may someday find its way into future quilting projects. Some of these future quilting projects will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight. In particular, considering that teacher well-being is an area that is gaining interest in educational research and practice literature (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Hobson & Maxwell, 2016; Jennings, 2015; Kidger et al, 2016; McCallum & Price, 2010; Ott et al, 2017; Shirley et al, 2019), I would like to delve deeper into the examination of how mentoring and coaching might also support beginning teacher, district leaders and students' well-being capacity and sense of flourishing in schools. I am excited about these future quilting projects and look forward to seeing how some of the discarded pieces from this quilt might be stitched into something new. I also look forward to using the skills I have learned as a qualitative quilter in a new quilting project. In the end, despite its many imperfections, dropped stitches, and loose threads, I accept that I have created a perfectly imperfect quilt. Best summed up by Cassandra Ellis, author of *Quilt Love*, it is these imperfections that are part of the overall beauty of a handmade quilt:

I believe quilts should show both the hand and the heart of the maker, so revel in your imperfections and personal style—imperfect is indeed perfect. Have confidence in your choice of colors and patterns. If you are making a gift for someone, think about them and what they love, but don't forget to put a bit of you into it—you are, after all, creating a story that weaves your threads together (p.8).

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that guides this research project is the social learning theory, communities of practice (Wenger, 1998, 2006) and landscapes of practice (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Although it figures heavily in the overall quilt design, not all fabric blocks use this framework. This decision was made based on publication type and topic, however the landscapes of practice theory offers a useful framework for future manuscripts. Defined in Wenger's (1998) earlier work, to be a 'true' community of practice there are three crucial elements that must be combined and developed: domain, community, and practice. First, members have a shared *domain* of interest through commitment and competence. Second, members engage in joint discussions and activities as a *community*. Third, as a *practice*, members develop a shared repertoire of common resources of language, styles and routines by means of which they express their identities. Communities of practice can be formal or informal and are an integral part of daily life. Researchers show that a strong community can wield the power to enact policies or subvert them, foster change or resist it, spread innovation or impede it (Schlager & Tusco, 2003). As Wenger (1998) states, communities of practice "are a force to be reckoned with, for better or worse" (p. 85).

Communities of practice theory is best described as a socially situated, practice-based approach to learning. Individuals learn as they interact with each other, as well as with materials and representational systems (Cobb & Bowers, 1999). Learning within and between communities of practice is best understood as a process of 'attunement' (Fenwick, 2014). As newcomers enter and join communities of practice, they attune themselves and adapt their web of beliefs and practice to what goes on within that community. However, "the 'body of knowledge' of a profession is not understood as a reified curriculum, but rather as a 'landscape of practice' consisting of a complex system of communities of practice and the boundaries

between them” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 13). It is through the relationships, the practice, artifacts, and the wider social organization that growth and transformation of identities emerges. At the same time, through their participation, the newcomer changes the community and its practices. The attunement of both community and its individual members can be seen as collective learning.

Professional occupations, like teaching, are constituted by a complex landscape of different communities of practice which all have their own histories, domains, and regimes of competence (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Although there are many formal learning structures in schools, learning also happens through the many informal social networks of teachers. For the Wenger-Trayners (2015), competence in the landscapes of practice theory is described as “the dimension of knowing negotiated and defined within a single community of practice” (p. 13). To be competent in a community of practice, individuals learn how to participate in its discourse, norms, and practices in order to gain full membership status or ‘mastery’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Knowledgeability, on the other hand, refers to “the complex relationships people establish with respect to a landscape of practice which make them recognizable as reliable sources of information or legitimate providers of services” (p. 22). Thus, individuals are deemed knowledgeable in a school district when they understand the different regimes of competence and how to negotiate and attune themselves to these practices. Participation in a landscape of practice is “a dance of the self” (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 24) as individuals are shaped by their journey through the landscape and also shape the landscape by their experiences.

Amongst the different communities of practice that exist in schools and school districts, there are clear power dynamics at play. Schools combine the fluid, mutually transformative

interactions between individual and community of practice; just as the individual influences the community, the community influences individual. Within the landscape, teachers can identify or dis-identify with a number of communities of practice. As noted earlier, when a newcomer enters a community, there is a process of alignment and realignment that occurs between competence and personal experience. As the community's regime of competence pulls, challenges, and transforms the newcomer, they can also refuse or be refused by the community which may leave them marginalized. Thus, "[l]earning to become a practitioner is not best understood as approximating better and better reified body of knowledge. Rather it is developing a meaningful identity of both competence and knowledgeability in a dynamic and varied landscape of relevant practices" (p. 23). Naturally, in a landscape of practice hierarchies exist. The relationships and boundaries between the different communities of practice are in constant negotiation and "boundary crossing and boundary encounters are crucial aspects of living in a landscape of practice" (p.19). For teaching fellows who are newcomers to communities of practice having MCs who can act as brokers to help them navigate the various boundaries and facilitate 'cross-boundary experiences' are essential. As stated by the Wenger-Trayners (2015), "[w]hether the competence of a community is recognized as knowledge depends on its position in the politics of the landscape" (p. 16). Ultimately, schools are socially and culturally constructed sites that (re)produce and (trans)form learning and encompass complex relations (Netolicky, 2016). In this study, the landscapes of practice theory was found to be a useful lens to explore the complexities inherent in teacher induction and how to explore the various stakeholder perspectives.

Study findings

Using the theoretical framework outlined above, this qualitative case study examined the lived experience of the MCs in the WQSB. As critical actors in the TIP, I was interested in how the MC role influenced experienced teachers' professional learning and development, classroom practice, and well-being. I was also interested in how the different WQSB stakeholders perceived the impact of the TIP on the landscape of the school district. Since this final patchwork quilt is comprised of different manuscripts that each focused on a different TIP pillar, the aim of the following summary of findings is to connect the threads and answer the research project's guiding questions. It is important to remember in reading these findings that the TIP is a bespoke induction program developed at the grassroots level by a committee of volunteer administrators, teachers and consultants. As such, as a pracademic quilter it is my aim that these findings are not only useful to leaders in the WQSB, or the 'case' in this study, but also that insights around the emerging strengths and tensions of the TIP might also be of interest to other jurisdictions engaged in the design and development of systemic teacher induction programs. However, it is important to heed Hargreaves's (2015) warning that initiatives need to emerge from their own context and cannot simply be lifted from one jurisdiction to another.

Question 1: What is the influence of the mentor-coach role on veteran teachers in the WQBS?

The main focus of this case study was on the experience of the mentor-coach in the WQSB. Chapters Four and Five provide insight on how the mentor-coach role supported experienced teachers' professional learning and development, classroom practice, and well-being. According to the educational literature, coaching and mentoring have emerged as interventions that foster collaborative teaching communities, support professional growth, improve teaching practice, and cultivate a learning culture in schools (Campbell & van

Nieuwerburgh, 2018; Cornett & Knight, 2008; Knight, 2007; Kraft, Blazar & Hogan, 2018; Lofthouse *et al.*, 2010; Netolicky, 2016). It is also clear from the research that mentor–coaches need support, professional learning activities, experience, and time to become effective in the role (Lofthouse & Hall, 2014; Wong & Nicotera, 2003). One of the key findings from this case study was the importance of developing a professional learning network (PLN) to support and challenge mentor–coaches.

As described in Chapter Four, PLNs are defined by Brown and Poortman (2018) as “any group who engage in collaborative learning with others outside of their everyday community of practice (Wenger, 1998), in order to improve teaching and learning in their school(s) and/or the school system more widely” (p.1). PLNs are defined by their geography, membership, and the nature of their learning. For Brown and Poortman (2018), in order to be an effective PLN and support transformational teaching and learning in a school district, there are five interconnected elements: focus, collaboration, reflective professional inquiry, leadership, and group and individual learning. These five elements were used as a priori themes during the abductive analysis (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014) to examine the WQSB MC PLN. Findings from the study also indicated that although the MC PLN had many strengths and was a critical component of the MCF, ongoing attention must be paid by the district to ensure that clear, deliberate, and sustained structures (including time, space, and resources) and processes are in place for mentor–coaches to meet, collaborate, reflect, lead, and learn (Brown & Poortman, 2018; Munby & Fullan, 2016; Stoll, 2015; Vescio et al, 2008). Study findings also indicated that in response to the ever-increasing diversity and experience amongst mentor–coaches, the MC PLN would also need to find ways to challenge and support the professional learning and development of *all* its members in order to sustain MC motivation, engagement, and commitment in the program.

Another important finding from this study examined how the MCF could support experienced teachers' well-being. As outlined in Chapter Five, the study used Seligman's (2011) PERMA well-being framework to analyze data collected from the mentor-coach questionnaires, interviews, and focus group. For Seligman (2011), well-being is defined as a multidimensional construct that bridges the hedonic aspect of feeling good with the eudaimonic aspects of living well. There are five contributing well-being elements that together form the acronym PERMA: positive emotion, engagement, (positive) relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. In this study, all five elements were reported by mentor-coach participants and were shown to contribute to their sense of well-being. However, the study findings also indicated that being a mentor-coach should not be viewed as a panacea for well-being. Rather, tensions emerged around the need for greater clarity and transparency around the MCF process and how MCs are selected in the WQSB in order to address conflicts amongst colleagues. Additionally, the success of the MCF hinges on the positive relationship between the MC and the teaching fellow. As such, district leaders and administrators must be careful in making the MCF pairings and consider alternative options for relationships that are not working. Finally, in this study, mentor-coach well-being was linked to their ongoing professional growth and engagement. In support of the findings from Chapter Four, the development of a learning community or PLN that will both challenge and support mentor-coaches is critical.

Question 2: How do the WQSB stakeholders perceive the impact of the TIP?

Overall, this study found that the TIP has had a significant influence in the WQSB. As stated by one TIP team member, the program "involves a third of the teachers at any one time directly and I think it has directly impacted over the last eight years over 70 percent of our teachers...it is one of the biggest education programs we have in the school board" (TIP focus

group). This sentiment of TIP's position in the district was echoed by other participants. For example, the TIP was referred to as a "big-ticket item in the board" (WQTA focus group) and "one of the most important initiatives that we have as a school board" (Administrator focus group). For the majority of participants in this study, especially those in leadership positions (district leaders, consultants, mentor-coaches, and administrators) the TIP was reported as having had a mostly positive impact in the school district. Specifically, system leaders credited it with establishing a more structured and systemic induction process, contributing to a more transparent and standardized evaluation process, and "promoting a rich pedagogical culture" (administrator focus group) in the school district. It was also perceived to have "improved the quality of teaching and learning within our schools and our school board" (Administrator focus group). In describing the program's impact, another administrator noted:

As a whole system we have a common language and common expectations. We have improved the quality of teaching and learning within our schools and our school board. And we have started to grow the leadership part. (Administrator focus group)

For the teaching fellows in this study, it was the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF) pillar that was considered "the most valuable part" (TF questionnaire) of the TIP. Participants reported that their mentor-coach supported them throughout a challenging first year in the district by helping them to navigate school and district culture as well as improve their teaching practice. The MCF was also reported by many stakeholder groups as being instrumental in 'growing the top.' The mentor-coach role offered veteran teachers meaningful leadership opportunities, a structured way to support colleagues new to the district, and an opportunity to learn and develop as a mentor-coach. The MCF was also reported by veteran teachers as helping them to improve their classroom practice. For one mentor-coach participant,

“working with this program has improved my practice so much and I am so aware of what should be going on in the classroom. I am observing myself all the time and I am improving tremendously” (MC focus group). According to TIP team members, the most positive impact of the TIP is that “the overall quality of teaching in our board is better” (TIP team focus group).

Like any systemic educational reform, however, the TIP is not without its critics. As one member of the WQTA noted, the TIP was “one of the things I think we can cut way back on...or get rid of it all together” (WQTA focus group). Some of the key concerns that emerged in the study were around the value of the program relative to its cost, the lack of understanding about TIP’s underlying purpose, and whether or not the program was actually making a positive difference in teachers’ classroom practice. Despite the TIP being promoted in its promotional documents as a supportive structure for professional learning and development (WQSB, 2018b), this view was not shared across all stakeholder groups. In particular, for WQTA focus group members referred to the TIP as “hoop jumping,” and a “make-work project.” In discussing the criticism of the program, a TIP team member responded that, “I find it really frustrating when I hear that because I feel that those people don’t really understand the program and they are not well informed” (TIP team focus group). From the study, one of the key areas that needs further attention by the district was how to clarify the mentoring and coaching terminology and consider ways to improve how these approaches were practiced in the district. Whereas participants who had more experience as mentor-coaches described mentoring and coaching as distinct, responsive, and non-evaluative approaches, other stakeholder groups like the WQTA viewed mentoring as answering questions and coaching more as a compliance exercise to help someone get through the TIP. Ultimately, they questioned whether the role of the mentor-coach in the MCF was anything more than “just helping this person get through the evaluation?”

Another tension that emerged in this study was whether an effective balance between quality assurance and professional support had been achieved in the TIP. Whereas district leaders credited the TIP with “raising the bar” (TIP Team focus group) and setting high expectations and standards across the district, other participant groups saw it more “as a weeding process to make sure that the proper individuals are kept with the WQSB” (WQTA focus group). Challenges were most directly levelled at the value of the Professional Growth Portfolio (PGP) and the structure of the TIP’s formal observation process, which included ranked lessons and external observers. Ultimately, as discussed in Chapter Six, the teacher evaluation pillar emerged in this study as the most contentious component of the TIP across all stakeholder groups. Concerns were also raised about this pillar’s influence on the rest of the program, especially on the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF). In the end, the administrator emerged as a key element in how the teacher evaluation process was understood and experienced within the TIP. In this study, the experience and expertise of the mentor–coach was also found to be pivotal to how the TIP and the MCF were perceived in different schools. Best summed up by one WQTA representative: “If you get the right person and pairing, and it works, then it is good.” However, when the mentoring and coaching fellowship does not work, it was often linked to an overall negative experience in the TIP. As stated by one teaching fellow, “[m]y mentor–coach made my first year in the WQSB much more difficult” (TF questionnaire). Study data revealed that mentor–coaches also grew and improved through experience and ongoing professional learning. In particular, as they became more skilled in understanding the difference between mentoring and coaching and their role as an MC within TIP, they reported having a greater positive experience with their TF. This sentiment is best described by one of the experienced MCs during one of their interviews:

My first year [as an MC] I was completely lost, and I was just making it up. I didn't like how that felt at all. I didn't feel like I was doing what I was supposed to be doing and I don't know if it was a coincidence or not but the teachers [I worked with] weren't successful. I don't know [...] was that why they weren't reengaged? We will never know. I do know subsequently that teachers who work with me have been successful and they feel their teaching practice has improved. (Alice)

In the end, all participants acknowledged that the TIP has had a significant impact in the WQSB. However, whether this influence was reported as positive or negative was highly dependent on personal experience. In particular, it was whether their own MCF experience was positive or negative that made the biggest impact on their perspective of the TIP. For participants who reported a positive and beneficial relationship with their MC as TFs, it was more likely that they considered the TIP's impact in the WQSB to be positive. On the flip side, those who reported a negative MCF experience were more likely to report that the TIP's influence was negative. Since teachers are part of numerous communities of practice, these positive or negative experiences were also likely to influence how the TIP was perceived within and amongst their school and district colleagues. Thus, one of the key challenges for district leaders is how to gather and address the critical feedback in order to inform future actions in the TIP. Also, an area that warrants attention remains how to better communicate the evolving nature of the TIP's structure and purpose to teachers outside of the program. As stated by the TIP team, "status quo is not an option" (TIP team focus group). Findings from this study indicated that although one of the TIP's biggest strengths is that it is always adapting, evolving, and improving based on participant feedback, this is not communicated clearly beyond TIP participants. Also, with concerns raised that not all participants feel comfortable giving honest

and critical feedback, the district leaders must consider ways to open the channels of communication while promoting the programmatic changes.

Connected threads

The final section of this penultimate chapter is to connect some of the threads that have emerged in the patchwork quilt and highlight its cornerstone themes. Specifically, five themes will be discussed: the importance and role of clarity, adaptability, relationships, trust, and power in an effective systemic teacher induction program.

Clarity

Systemic change initiatives in school districts need compelling, coherent, and shared vision (Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Louis, 2006; Rosenholtz, 1991; Sarason, 1971), as well as shared values (Horowitz, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005). In this study, clarity emerged as an important component for the successful implementation of the TIP in relation to: key terminology such as mentoring and coaching; purpose and structure of the TIP; the selection process of mentor-coaches; and the purpose and process of teacher evaluation within the TIP.

As highlighted in this study, the terms mentoring and coaching have conflicting interpretations and usage within the educational and research communities (CUREE, 2005; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Knight, 2007; Moir & Bloom, 2003; Sharpe & Nishmura, 2017). Although work has been done in the WQSB to clarify how these terms are understood within an induction context, there is still a lack of common understanding among many stakeholders—especially those not involved in the TIP. Specifically, some participants in this study questioned whether ‘compliance coaching’ has been adopted in the district. This view conflicts with the

current literature that describes coaching as an approach that has the “dual aims of working towards continual development and refinement of practice, whilst positioning the experience, perspective, and voices of teachers in a place of respect and non-judgement” (Andrews & Munro, 2019, p. 163). When the district establishes greater clarity around the TIP’s key terminology and the role of coaching in the MCF, it is likely the selection of the mentor-coaches and perception of the program will improve. Also, MCs need a clear and deep understanding of the differences to ensure high levels of support and challenge for their TF. With greater clarity across the district, the potential power of mentoring and coaching may also be experienced beyond the TIP.

Finally, with teacher evaluation emerging from this study as the TIP’s most contentious component, further clarity is necessary to ensure there is a shared vision of its purpose and process across the district. Based on the province’s *Core Professional Competencies for the Teaching Profession* (MELS, 2001), the standards that guide the teacher evaluation pillar have the potential to be seen across the district as a useful map of what good teaching looks like and provide commonality of language (Netolicky, 2016). Continued work in the district is necessary to ensure that the standards reflect the WQSB context and that they do not become part of a regulatory and measurement-oriented performance culture that can have a damaging effect on teacher autonomy and professional identity (Andrews & Munro, 2019).

Adaptability

Systems must be flexible, dynamic and responsive to participant feedback. As stated by Lofthouse (2019), “there should be reciprocal relationship between the how the institution...adapts and improves over time and how the individuals within it adapt too” (p. 179). One of the key themes that emerged from this study was the TIP’s adaptability. Across all

stakeholder groups, participants noted that one of the program's key strengths was that it was anchored in a school district that prided itself on being a "learning organization" (TIP team focus group). Much of the credit for this growth-oriented approach rests with the district leaders who continually seek out participant feedback and make changes to the program every year.

However, as noted above, tensions remain around how to better communicate these changes outside of the TIP and how to ensure all participants can give honest and constructive feedback.

As noted in the recent study, *The State of Educators Professional Learning in Canada* (Campbell et al, 2016) – there is no one size fits all approach to teachers' professional learning, nor should there be. Initiatives must meet the priority needs of teachers at different stages in their career and continue to challenge teachers into critical interrogation of practice (Hobson et al, 2009; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Thus, the district must consider how to build a culture that not only supports meaningful formalised self-reflection and contemplation (Barendsen et al., 2011), but also encourages collaborative professionalism (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018), which includes teachers observing each other beyond the TIP (Fleming & Kleinhenz, 2007).

Relationships

Another theme that emerged in this study was around ways to support positive and collaborative relationships for teachers within and beyond the TIP. Although Hargreaves et al (2019) noted that "[o]n average, it is definitely better to collaborate than not collaborate" (p.98), not all professional collaboration is effective, meaningful or productive (Datnow, 2018). In fact, educational researchers have shown that the individual's capacity to work independently with personal vision needs to be balanced alongside collegiality and collaboration (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Netolicky, 2019). Rather than facilitate groupthink, coerced compliance or 'contrived collegiality' (Hargreaves, 1994; Hargreaves and Skelton, 2012), professional

relationships should empower and inspire teachers. Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) argue that true collaborative professionalism offers both high support (solidarity) *and* high challenge (solidity). Effective collaboration enhances collective teacher efficacy (Donohoo, 2017; Donohoo et al, 2018), and cultivates teachers' beliefs that together they can make a difference in student learning and achievement. Thus, collaboration is not "a collection of superstar teachers" (Garmston & Wellman, 2013, p. 16), but interdependent colleagues who learn and grow together as a collective to improve professional practice in classrooms, schools, and the district. Findings from this study show that the MC and TF relationship can have a wide-reaching impact in the district. In fact, it can influence how teachers understand collaborative professionalism within and beyond the TIP (Kutsyuruba, Walker, Bosica, & Matheson, 2017). As stated by Carol Campbell (2019), "collaborative professionalism needs intentional work, it does not just happen" (p.81). This study findings support the view that these types of collaborative relationships take time, resources, sustained commitment, daily attention and continued cultivation by system leaders in order to influence district culture.

Trust

The importance and role of trust emerged at every level in the TIP structure. As noted by one participant, the MC role is a very 'honoured position' (Laurie) and involves a great deal of trust for it to be effective. This view is also supported by the literature. As stated by Andrews and Munro (2019), "[t]he act of working closely alongside someone to support ongoing reflection and evaluation, goal creation, research and practice trialling, is a privilege" (p.169). For Tschannen-Moran (2014), individual and organizational trust is the foundation of effective school relationships. Not only do teachers need to trust one another, but they must also trust

their administrators and district leaders. For Browning (2019), trust is described as the lubricant that makes it possible for organizations to work.

When trust is in place, teachers will feel safe to be vulnerable, take risks and engage in reform initiatives (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). According to cognitive coaching experts Costa and Garmston (2003), when the neurochemical pathways in the brain work in a way that individuals do not feel safe, they cannot think and learn (Netolicky, 2016). Thus, for learning to occur trust and safety must also be established; “If threat, fear, pain even in the most minute portions are perceived, neurological and chemical processes occur which prepare the system for survival, not reflection” (Costa & Garmston, 2003, p. 5). However, too much safety does not mean learning. Rather, challenge or ‘dissonance’ (Lofthouse et al, 2010) is also critical to learning. In order to balance safety and challenge, trust must be fostered and supported. Yet, as Browning (2019) highlights, “trust is a socially constructed phenomenon; it means different things for different people” (p. 209). Professional learning activities for MCs and district leaders should explore what trust means in the WQSB and how to cultivate it (Brown, 2015; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Ultimately, developing and maintaining a professional culture of trust is essential to improve schools, increase achievement, and boost teacher morale (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Walker et al., 2017). Summed up by Whiteside (2017), it is all about building “relationships rooted in mutual respect, where the participants are equals, and there is a genuine willingness to share practice. Trust and rapport can thus effect positive change for both the teacher, the pupils and the school as a whole” (p.5).

Power

The final theme that emerged from each fabric block in this research project is the role power plays in a systemic teacher induction program. Considering the high-stakes (job or no

job) element in the TIP, key questions that emerged from this study were around who gets to judge if teachers are competent and what criteria is used on which this judgement is based (Andrews & Munro, 2019).

In the district, administrators are responsible for overseeing the summative evaluation of TFs. However, tensions emerged for stakeholders in this study around whether there had been sufficient clarity, trust, and support available for administrators to make these high-stakes decisions. In their pan-Canadian study on teacher induction and mentoring, Kutsyuruba and Walker (2017) noted that, “[b]eginning teachers indicated that administration was a [supportive] source through both pressure and encouragement, and that some expectations were felt coming from the school board, high teaching quality standards, and their provincial governments—all examples of senior sources” (p.40). It is clear from findings in this study that the TIP has had a significant influence in defining what effective teaching looks in the WQSB and that this is anchored in the provincial standards. Although in this study the use of these standards was perceived by stakeholders as mostly positive, there is always a danger that they can make teachers’ work become itemised and categorized into checklists (Andrews & Munro, 2019; Ball, 2003; Hargreaves, 2000; Netolicky, 2016)

Concerns were also raised in the study (especially in the WQTA focus group) around the influence the TIP has in privileging certain ideas and instructional strategies while excluding others. As noted by Walker et al (2017), “[w]here there was a lack of alignment between the teaching philosophy held by beginning teachers and the ethos of their school, this was particularly problematic, with levels of conflict with school culture reported as a consequence” (p.394). Also, within a high-stakes culture, it is also likely that TFs will not reveal critiques and concerns in relation to these standards for fear they will be seen as challenging or incompetent.

As stated by Andrews and Munro (2019), “[t]eacher appraisal and training programs aligned with these [evaluative] aims only serve to compound cultures of performance and compliance and can stymie rich dialogue and action that robustly explores practice developments and engages with educational research” (p.164). From this study, it is essential that the MC and the MCF be seen as separate from the teacher evaluation process and that a process is developed for the standards to be revisited and critically discussed.

Finally, tensions emerged in this study around whether the TIP promoted professional growth or served management agendas (Lofthouse et al., 2010; Lofthouse & Hall, 2014; Lofthouse & Leat, 2013; Netolicky, 2016). Thus, mentoring and coaching must remain focused on individual growth and flourishing rather than be seen to “manoeuvre teacher learning and development closer towards collective compliance” (Andrews & Munro, 2019, p.164). Thus, district leaders must ensure that the TIP remains properly resourced in terms of time, money, and support and that its structure adapts to the ongoing changes in the district. The dangers of ‘performativity’ (Ball, 2003) will become an issue when the TIP becomes too formalized and focused on practitioners responding to targets, indicators, and evaluations rather than critical reflection and personal and professional goal-setting. Highlighted by Lofthouse (2019), “both coaching and mentoring...are workplace learning processes that can get entangled in workplace cultures making them liable to be squeezed under time pressures and potentially distorted by the performativity agenda” (p. 174). Ultimately, the goal in the TIP is to unleash the potential in all teachers—new and experienced—and create a culture where every teacher believes they need to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better (William, 2019).

Chapter 8—The Final Stitches

*Celebrate, commemorate, but most of all just **remember**: remember the **place**,
the time, the life, or the person*

Ellis, (2012, p.5)

The last stage in the making of a patchwork quilt is to finish it off by stitching its raw edges together with a border. As a completed project, this dissertation captures the TIP at a specific moment in time. Specifically, it reports on the WQSB's TIP using data collected during January to June 2016. Since that time, the TIP has undergone many substantial changes and many of these changes can be directly linked to this doctoral project. Overall, the ongoing changes that have been made to TIP have been received well by stakeholders. Since teaching fellows are the stakeholders most directly impacted by the TIP, it is rewarding to have the opportunity to see their positive reaction to these changes in texts published external to the WQSB (see McIntyre, 2017; Nadler, 2018). The aim of this final chapter is to outline some of the key changes that have been made to the TIP as a result of this study, highlight issues that still require attention by the district, and finally, pose recommendations for future scholarly work and practice.

As a qualitative case study, the examination of the influence of the TIP on MCs and the WQSB is best understood in terms of multiple interacting factors, events, and processes that give

shape to it and are part of it (Merriam, 1998). As outlined in greater detail in Chapter Two, the TIP is a product of numerous influences, initiatives, and stakeholder perspectives within the WQSB. Since the district context or the quilt back frames the development and design of the TIP, this quilt also only captures what was happening in the district in 2016. Hence, this finished quilt is best characterized as a community textile that while primarily addressing the past, also connects to the present and the future (Torsney & Elsley, 1994). In describing this connection, the qualitative quilter, Ferrier (2007) noted that “embodied in the cloth of the quilt are stories of a people, voices pieced and connected to others in a dialogue” (p.60). The aim of this chapter is to spark future dialogue and offer recommendations on ways to improve the TIP in the WQSB.

Changes to the TIP

Greater buy-in.

Over the past decade study participants reported that there has been increased stakeholder buy-in for the TIP across the school district. One of the key reasons for this can be attributed to the number of WQSB teachers, leaders, and administrators who have at some point in their experience participated in the program. In fact, one TIP team member noted in their focus group that over 70 percent of teachers had been either TFs or MCs at some point in their career. TIP team members also reported that many of the current MCs were once themselves TFs and that a majority of the school administrators and district consultants had also been MCs. As such, the growing participation rates have likely led not only to an increased understanding of the program’s process and purpose, but also to greater buy-in throughout the district.

Unpacking the terminology.

One of the major influences this doctoral project has had on the WQSB is related to unpacking the TIP's key terminology. Referenced in Chapter Two, the induction program has undergone a name change. Originally called the New Teacher Program (NTP), as a result of this project the name of the program was officially changed to the Teacher Induction Program (TIP). It was felt that since all TFs, regardless of previous teaching experience, were required to take part in the program, using the moniker 'new' was off-putting. Additionally, the district leaders recognized that experienced teachers were more likely to benefit from a coaching approach rather than mandatory mentorship. They wanted the name to reflect the process of induction that was responsive to *all* teachers' needs, not just those who were beginning or 'new' teachers.

Another significant change that resulted from this research was a clearer understanding within the TIP about the difference between mentoring and coaching. Also noted in Chapter Two, the WQSB first modelled the MCF pillar on a mentoring program purchased from the United States. In this program, coaching was described as an element of mentoring, along with consulting and collaborating. As a result of this project's literature review, however, it became clear that coaching was conceptualized as a distinct approach from mentoring. Although there still remains a lack of clarity and some confusion in the empirical and practical literature about how these two terms are defined, the visual developed for this research project has been adopted in the district and features in its documentation (WQSB, 2018b). Thus, mentoring and coaching are understood in the WQSB as two distinct yet interconnected processes that are essential during teacher induction.

The TIP design and delivery.

As outlined in this dissertation, one of the greatest strengths of the TIP is that it is always evolving and changing based on participant feedback and new research. That said, the teacher

evaluation pillar still remains the most contentious component of the TIP. However, over the past few years, there have been significant changes made to how TFs are evaluated in the TIP.

First, findings from this study indicated that the Professional Growth Portfolio (PGP) was an unpopular component of the summative evaluation process. Although conceived to provide TFs with a voice in their evaluation and a structure for reflective practice, participants reported the PGP as a source of stress and extra work during an already busy and challenging first year in the district. Outlined in greater detail in Chapter Six, the PGP is no longer a part of the summative evaluation and has been replaced by the *Reflective Record*. Described in the TIP Handbook (WQSB, 2018b), the reflective record supports ongoing critical reflection and is anchored in the TFs two termly professional goals. A key component of the reflective record is that the administrator meets with the TF to review term goals and discuss progress. Classroom observations are also thus linked to these term goals. Anecdotal feedback from district stakeholders suggests that participants prefer this approach to ongoing and meaningful reflective practice and professional documentation. However, a lack of clarity and consistency still remains for how the reflective record process is understood and structured by some administrators, MCs and TFs.

Second, there has been a concerted attempt by district leaders to clarify that teacher evaluation is the responsibility of administrators. This study's findings indicated that this was not always clear to district stakeholders, such as administrators, TFs, MCs, and WQTA executives. In fact, many participants referenced the twenty-minute formal observation conducted by the TIP team as a key determinant in whether a TF is successful or not in the district. As stated in Chapter Six, a teacher's career should never rest on a snapshot observation by external observers. Since the co-authored chapter on teacher evaluation in the TIP was

written and published, there are no longer formal observations conducted for TFs in their first year. Instead, all observations are conducted by the individual school administrators, who can reach out to the TIP team and other district administrators should they require support. Formal observations with the TIP team are still in place for TFs in their second year. Currently, these lessons are no longer ranked using the rating scale. Instead, the focus is on the feedback process and TFs are only told whether their lesson was successful or unsuccessful. If the lesson is unsuccessful, a support plan is put into place and a follow-up observation is organized. It is important to note that there continues to be disagreement amongst district leaders and stakeholders about the value of ranking lessons. As such, the lesson observation process remains in flux.

Another change that emerged from this study was focused on increasing district understanding of the TIP process and purpose, buy-in, and clarification around the MC selection process. Since this project, district leaders have established regular monthly WQSB consultant meetings to enhance communication. The purpose of these meetings is to provide a structure for different consultants to not only share best practices, but also to communicate and collaborate around the type of support being offered to TFs in the district. In order to better support administrators, the TIP team now regularly presents at management meetings an ongoing update on changes that have made to the program and new learning shared at the MC PLN.

Administrators also collaborate at these meetings around best practices in how they can better select and support their MCs, as well as structure and conduct TF observations, meetings, and evaluations. Finally, although the selection of MCs remains in the hands of administrators, based on data collected from this research project the TIP team has produced a guide that clearly outlines the key qualities and characteristics of an effective MC and describes in detail their role

and responsibilities (WQSB, 2018b). Available to all staff in the district, this guide also includes this dissertation's visual representing how mentoring and coaching is conceptualized in the WQSB in an effort to clarify some of the misconceptions.

Next steps for the TIP

Although there have been many changes made to the TIP since the outset of this doctoral project, there still remain issues from this study that need attention. First, although there have been clear efforts to improve communication in the district about the purpose and structure of the TIP, there still exists a lack of understanding by teachers who are not involved in the program. Although some of these teachers have never been involved in the TIP, others may have once been TFs and/or MCs who have chosen to no longer be involved. These teachers may have a particular perception—negative or positive—of the program that is based on their own TIP experience. Considering the numerous and significant changes that have made to the program outlined above, it is likely that misconceptions persist amongst non-participants. Thus, district leaders may want to consider how to better communicate the changes that have made to the TIP, what the current structure looks like, and how participant feedback was used to inform these changes.

Second, this study found that MCs are the key to an effective mentoring and coaching process. In order to better understand the difference between mentoring and coaching and how and when to use each approach, MCs need support and meaningful professional learning activities. However, since the TIP is in its tenth year, there are a number of experienced MCs who need a different challenge in order to push their thinking and sustain their involvement. As noted in Chapter Four, the MC PLN is a valuable component of the TIP and an opportunity for

both experienced and novice MCs to collaborate and support one another. However, the TIP team may want to consider how to better differentiate the professional learning activities in order to meet the needs of *all* PLN members. This means that not only will they have to ensure new network members learn how to navigate the difference between mentoring and coaching, but also find ways to incorporate evidence-informed practices and different coaching models and approaches that will challenge experienced MCs. Since many MC participants in this study highlighted the value of working with external coaching experts, this may be an area for future exploration.

Recommendations for future research and practice

Like any study, the conclusion of one research project always leads to more questions. As a pracademic, I remain committed to focusing on problems of practice that emerge in my own school district, the WQSB. In particular, I continue to be interested in the WQSB's TIP and believe there are many future studies warranted.

One area that I would be interested in is the ways in which (if any) the TIP has influenced the coaching culture in different schools. From this study's data, references were often made by participants to how coaching was being adopted in their schools to support the professional learning and development of teachers beyond the TIP. I would be interested in learning more about the various coaching models and approaches have been adopted (i.e. the GROW model or Jim Knight's instructional coaching process), the perception of different teachers within the different schools around coaching, and the ways in which the TIP is perceived to have influenced the school and district's coaching culture.

Another area for future research will be to examine teacher attrition more closely in the WQSB. Current district data indicates that the number of TFs involved in the TIP continues to be high (around 20-25 percent of the teaching staff in the WQSB). Considering one of the TIP's aims was to attract and retain teachers new to the district, it would be useful to examine these numbers more closely in relation to provincial and national statistics. I would also like to capture some of the contributing factors that may influence a TF's decision in whether to stay or leave the WQSB. Additionally, I am interested in the various ways (if any) the experience and skill of a MC influences the TF's likelihood to remain in the WQSB. I believe Hall and Hord's (2014) "Concerns-Based Adoption Model", with its "Levels of Use" dimension would be a useful tool to support this future research.

Finally, future research is warranted to better understand whether or not the TIP is making a difference in student learning and achievement. As noted by one WQTA executive, the TIP "is a big-ticket item in the school board. A lot of money is invested into it. Is it invested properly?" (WQTA focus group). Similar questions were also posed by an administrator in their focus group:

How are we going to tell that our board is better? Are our academic standards better? [...]

How do we judge the effectiveness of the system on a long-term basis? It is great to say we have great teachers, but what evidence do we have? What results do we have?

According to recent results provided by district leaders there does appear to be a marked improvement in graduation rates and student achievement on the provincial leaving exams since the TIP's implementation in 2009 (Ministere de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement Supérieur [MEES], 2018). With recent studies indicating the positive effect of teacher coaching on instruction and student achievement (Kraft, Blazar & Hogan, 2018), as well as student attitudes

and behaviour (Blazar & Kraft, 2017), examining the TIP in relation to student learning and achievement is worth exploring further.

Conclusion

With these final stitches I am reminded that this patchwork quilt reveals a picture of one moment in time. Although it focuses on the teacher induction program of one small English language school district in Western Québec, Canada, there are so many more quilts left to be made. With the research experience I have gained through this doctoral project, I look forward to using the techniques, strategies, and lessons I have learned in future quilting projects. For now, however, I am thrilled to be putting the finishing touches on this patchwork quilt. In the end, it has been a rewarding experience to take fabric from my place of work and stitch it into something tangible and meaningful. Succinctly summed up by Canadian quilter and my long-time family friend, Suzanne Paquette (2019):

A talisman of sorts, the quilt helps bring our most personal reflections about a person, time, place, or event (and sometimes all of those) to the forefront—a chance to reconnect with who and what is most important (p. 8).

For the chance to think deeply, reconnect with and thread together different parts of my professional and academic life, I will be forever grateful.

Thank you for reading.

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Appendices

List of appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approvals

Appendix B: Mentor–coach recruitment letter for semi-structured interviews

Appendix C: Mentor–coach semi-structured interview consent form

Appendix D: Mentor–coach semi-structured interview protocol

Appendix E: Focus group recruitment script

Appendix F: Stakeholder Focus Group Consent Form

Appendix G: Focus Group protocol

Appendix H: Teaching fellow Year 1 Questionnaire


Appendix I: Teaching fellow Year 2 Questionnaire

Appendix J: Mentor-coach Questionnaire

Appendix K: Administrator Questionnaire

Appendix A: Ethics Approvals

A1. University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board

File Number: 12-15-11		Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 31/07/2016	
Université d'Ottawa Service de subventions de recherche et d'éthologie	University of Ottawa Research Grants and Ethics Services		
Ethics Approval Notice			
Social Science and Humanities REB			
Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)			
First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Role
Ruth	Kane	Education / Education	Supervisor
Trista	Hollweck	Education / Education	Student Researcher
File Number: 12-15-11			
Type of Project: PhD Thesis			
Title: Mentoring and coaching communities of practice: A case study of the experience of mentor-coaches in the Western Quebec School Board			
Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Approval Type	
31/07/2016	01/06/2017	Ia	
(Ia: Approval, Ib: Approval for initial stage only)			
Special Conditions / Comments: N/A			
1			
550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada (613) 562-5387 • Téléc./Fax (613) 562-5338 www.recherche.uottawa.ca/lecomologie/		550 Cumberland Street, room 154 Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada (613) 562-5387 • Téléc./Fax (613) 562-5338 www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/	

File Number: 12-15-11

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 31/07/2016



Université d'Ottawa **University of Ottawa**
Service de subventions de recherche et d'éthique Research Grants and Ethics Services

This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above named research project. Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions / Comments".

During the course of the project, the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the project (e.g., change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, including consent and recruitment documentation, should be submitted to the Ethics Office for approval using the "Modification to research project" form available at <http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews>.

Please submit an annual report to the Ethics Office four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval. To close the file, a final report must be submitted. These documents can be found at: <http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at: ethics@uOttawa.ca.

Signature:

Hoda Shawki
Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research
For Barbara Graves, Chair of the Social Sciences and Humanities REB

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550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, room 154
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www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie/ www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/

A2. Approval from the QSB Council of Commissioners

Approval of the research project is noted on page 4 of the Minutes from the QSB Council of Commissioners- the full document (minutes from this meeting) can be found at:
http://cswq.wqsb.qc.ca/documents/Minutes/2013_2014/coun112613.pdf

C-13/14-98

Trista Hollweck Request

IT WAS MOVED by Commissioner O'Brien that, as recommended by the Education Committee, Council approve a request from Trista Hollweck, a University of Ottawa doctorate student, to work with our New Teacher Induction Program mentors.

Carried unanimously

PROVINCE OF QUÉBEC **Western Québec School Board**

Minutes of the **Council of Commissioners** meeting held on November 26, 2013 at the Western Québec School Board, 15 rue Katimavik, Gatineau, Québec, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Commissioners Brunke, Chiasson, Daly, Davidson, Dionne, Garbutt (by telephone), Gunn, Guy, Hendry (by videoconference), Lanyi, Larivière (by videoconference), McCrank, O'Brien, Perry, Shea, Taylor and R. Young, and Parent Commissioners Boucher and Komm

Personnel:

Director of Human Resources and Technology, M. Dubeau
 Director of Education, M. Lothian
 Director of Student Services, B. Burn

REGRETS:

Commissioner Dexter and N. Young

The Director General, Paul Lamoureux, Assistant Director General/Director of Education, Adult Education and Vocational Training, R. Ahern, and the Director of Legal Services/ Secretary General, R. Vézina were also present.

Appendix B: Mentor–Coach recruitment letter for semi-structured interviews

Mentor–coaches were informed about the study by an email sent by the executive assistant to Mr. Michel Dubeau, Director of Human Resources at the Western Québec School Board. Mr. Dubeau is now the Director General of the WQSB and retains the Teacher Induction Program dossier at the WQSB.

Title of Project: A Patchwork Quilt: A qualitative case study examining mentoring, coaching and teacher induction in the Western Québec School Board

Trista Hollweck, Ph.D. Candidate,
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa
Lamoureux Hall, 145 Jean-Jacques Lussier
Phone: xxxx. E-mail: xxxx

Mentor–Coach Recruitment Script

As you know, the WQSB introduced the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) in 2009 to target new teacher attrition, reinvigorate veteran teachers and to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the district. For her PhD dissertation at the University of Ottawa, Trista Hollweck, is examining the experience of mentor–coaches involved in the TIP in the WQSB. Specifically, she is asking: What is the impact of being part of the TIP on the professional learning, practice and well-being of the mentor–coach? And, what is the impact of the TIP on the culture of the WQSB? You can find further details about the study in the attached consent forms.

In order to respond to these questions, 3-5 mentor-coaches are invited to participate in this research study. Selection will be based on a first come-first selected process, however there will be an attempt to have a mentor-coach that represents a variety of contexts, such as rural and urban, secondary and elementary, new and experienced, distance and school-based. Participation will include observations of your coaching and mentoring work and two (2) one-on-one interviews with the researcher that will take place in January/February and June, 2016. Each interview will be audio-taped and will last for one hour and will take place at a time and location of your choosing. The interviews will include questions about your experiences of working as a mentor-coach in the WQSB, how you became a mentor-coach and your thoughts around the impact it may be having on your new teacher, school and/or district. Your decision to participate, or to not participate, in this research project, will have no impact on your involvement within the TIP or as a teacher in the WQSB.

If you are interested in participating and sharing your experiences of being a mentor coach, I invite you to contact Trista Hollweck directly through email to arrange a time to meet so she can discuss the parameters of the project and the informed consent process. Trista can be contacted via email at xxxxx

Many thanks for your consideration of this invitation.

Appendix C: Mentor–Coach Semi-Structured Interview

Consent Form

Title of Research: A Patchwork Quilt: A qualitative case study examining mentoring, coaching and teacher induction in the Western Québec School Board

Researchers:

Trista Hollweck
Faculty of Education,
University of Ottawa
Phone: xxxx. Email: xxxx

Project Supervisors:

Prof. Ruth Kane
Faculty of Education,
University of Ottawa
Phone: xxxx. Email: xxxx

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Trista Hollweck, a PhD Candidate with the University of Ottawa. This study will be supervised by Dr. Ruth Kane and is funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Grant and has been approved by the Western Québec School Board (WQSB) Council of Commissioners and the Director of Human Resources, Mr. Michel Dubeau.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to examine the experience of mentor–coaches involved in the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) in the Western Québec School Board (WQSB). Specifically, the study aims to uncover the ways in which the mentoring and coaching role influences veteran teachers' professional identity, learning and practice. It also examines the impact of the mentoring and coaching community of practice on the culture of the WQSB.

Participation: My participation will consist of sharing my experiences in two (2) semi-structured interviews conducted at a location of my choice (likely my school). These interviews will be audio-taped. The time and location of the semi-structured interviews will be determined based on my availability, although I acknowledge that one will happen early in the new year (January/February) and the other in June. My participation will also consist of direct observations by the researcher of my practice as a mentor–coach. The observations may take place on the same day as my interviews or on another agreed upon date based on my availability.

My decision to participate, or to not participate, in this research study, will have no impact on my work as a mentor–coach or as a teacher in the WQSB.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks for participation in this study and I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks. There are no risks associated with involvement in this project aside from those experienced in everyday life. I have also been assured by the researcher that even though the interviews will be recorded using a digital recording device and pertinent quotes may be used in publications, my identity will not be divulged and, if selected, my quotes will be attributed to a pseudonym.

My participation in this research is completely voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any point. I can ask questions at any time, including during the research. I am also allowed to refuse to answer any questions. If I choose to stop participating, or refuse to answer certain questions, there will be no negative consequences and any interview data I have provided up to that time from will be deleted from the research project.

Benefits: This is an opportunity to have my voice and experiences heard, and to reflect on my experience as a mentor-coach within the WQSB's Teacher Induction Program (TIP). This may help me to ratify or strengthen my personal teaching philosophies and explore the impact my involvement in the program is having on my professional identity, learning and practice. My participation may also serve to improve the TIP and benefit the effective implementation of future coaching and mentoring programs.

Confidentiality: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for the development of a manuscript for research publication and that my confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms and the protection of the raw data in a secure office. The school board name will be revealed in resulting publications.

Anonymity: My identity will remain anonymous throughout the study. As a small school board, I am aware that certain identifiers (rural, northern, new mentor-coach) could reveal my identity. However, I have been assured by the researcher that no specific identifiers will be linked to direct quotations or specific comments. I have been assured by the researcher that I will be offered a copy of my interview transcript and will be given an opportunity during the analysis and writing stages to review the sections pertinent to my interviews and observations.

Conservation of data: The data collected (the transcripts from the interviews, observation notes and the audio-recording converted into a mp3 file) will be kept in a password protected USB storage device, in a locked office at the University of Ottawa. The original audio-recording will be destroyed once the recording has been transferred and transcribed. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the data. The data will be conserved for a period of five years following completion of the study, after which the data will be destroyed.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this research.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of

withdrawal will be destroyed and not be included in the publication of results. I understand that although the researcher of the study is a part-time consultant for the school board, I am under no obligation to participate and I am encouraged to reflect critically on my experiences. The data will not be used to evaluate my work as a mentor-coach.

Acceptance: I _____ agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Trista Hollweck of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Dr. Ruth Kane of the same faculty and institution.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or their supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact:
Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research,
University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall,
550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Tel.: (613) 562-5387 Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

I acknowledge that my signature signifies my consent to this study. Please keep one copy of this consent form for your own records.

Appendix D: Mentor–Coach Semi-Structured Interview

Protocol

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this interview. I understand that your time is valuable and there are many demands on your schedule. I appreciate you spending the following hour and a half with me. Your reflections are extremely helpful.

Today we are going to discuss the WQSB’s Teacher Induction Program (TIP). My research project examines the experience of mentor–coaches involved in the TIP in the WQSB. The first set of questions focuses on how being part of the TIP impact the professional learning, practice, and well-being of the mentor–coach.

- 1) Share your experience with the TIP.
- 2) How did you get involved as a mentor–coach in the TIP? Why did you accept this position?
- 3) What has been the biggest learning for you from your experience as a mentor–coach?
- 4) In what ways (if any) has the TIP had an impact on your teaching practice?
- 5) How do you define mentoring and coaching? Are they different?
- 6) What are the essential qualities of a mentor–coach?
- 7) Does coaching and mentoring fit in with your daily routine at school? Explain. Why or Why not?
- 8) How is the TIP different or similar from other school/board initiatives you have seen?

- 9) Do you think the training you have received has prepared you for your role as mentor–coach. Explain.
- 10) Can you sum up your experiences as a mentor–coach in one or two words?
- 11) What have been some of your successes as a mentor–coach?
- 12) What are some of the challenges you face?
- 13) How did you feel being part of the formal observation process? Explain.
- 14) Should mentor–coaches be involved in the evaluation process for new teachers?
- 15) How many mentor–coaches are there at your school? If more than one, do you work together and in what ways?

The final questions focus on the impact the TIP has had on your school and the WQSB.

- 16) What are your thoughts on this?
- 17) Have you see an impact on your staff? Your school? The students? The WQSB? In what ways?

Appendix E: Focus Group recruitment script

Title of Project: A Patchwork Quilt: A qualitative case study examining mentoring, coaching, and teacher induction in the Western Québec School Board

Trista Hollweck, Ph.D. Candidate,
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa
Lamoureux Hall, 145 Jean-Jacques Lussier
Phone: xxxxx
E-mail: xxxx

Focus Group Recruitment Script

Members from the 6 stakeholder groups (Mentor-coaches, Teaching fellows- Year 1 & 2, administrators, school board personnel, and union executive) will be informed about the study by an email sent by Mr. Michel Dubeau, Director of Human Resources at the Western Québec School Board. Mr. Dubeau is responsible for the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) at the WQSB.

As you know, the WQSB introduced the TIP in 2009 to target new teacher attrition, reinvigorate veteran teachers and to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the district. For her PhD dissertation at the University of Ottawa, Trista Hollweck, is examining the experience of mentor-coaches involved in the TIP in the WQSB. Specifically, she is asking: What is the impact of being part of the TIP on the professional learning, practice, and well-being of the mentor-coach? And, what is the impact of the TIP on the culture of the WQSB? You can find further information on the planned study in the attached consent forms.

In order to respond to these questions, 5-7 WQSB employees are needed to participate in face-to-face Focus group for this research study. Selection will be based on a first come-first selected process. The focus group will take place before the end of the school year and will include questions about your experience and thoughts about the Coaching and Mentoring Program in the WQSB. The focus group will be audio-taped and last about 90 minutes and will be scheduled at your convenience (based on a Doodle poll). Your decision to participate, or to not participate, in

this research project, will have no impact on your involvement within the TIP or as an employee in the WQSB.

If you are interested in participating and sharing your experiences of coaching and mentoring, I invite you to contact Trista Hollweck directly through email to arrange a time to meet so she can discuss the parameters of the project and the informed consent process. Trista can be contacted via email at xxxx

Many thanks for your consideration of this invitation.

Appendix F: Stakeholder Focus Group Consent Form

Title of Research: A Patchwork Quilt: A qualitative case study examining mentoring, coaching, and teacher induction in the Western Québec School Board

Researchers:

Trista Hollweck

Faculty of Education,

University of Ottawa

Phone: xxxx. Email: xxxxx

Project Supervisors:

Prof. Ruth Kane

Faculty of Education,

University of Ottawa

Phone: xxxx. Email: xxxxx

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Trista Hollweck, a PhD Candidate with the University of Ottawa. This study will be supervised by Dr. Ruth Kane and is funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Grant and has been approved by the Western Québec School Board (WQSB) Council of Commissioners and the Director of Human Resources, Mr. Michel Dubeau.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to examine the experience of mentor-coaches involved in the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) in the Western Québec School Board (WQSB). Specifically, the study aims to uncover the ways in which the mentoring and coaching role influences veteran teachers' professional identity, learning and practice. It also examines the impact of the mentoring and coaching community of practice on the culture of the WQSB.

Participation: My participation will consist of sharing my experiences in a face-to-face focus group conducted at the WQSB in Gatineau, Québec. The time and location of the face-to-face focus groups will be determined through a Doodle poll with all participants. The focus group will be an hour to one hour and a half in duration and audio-recorded for accurate transcriptions.

My decision to participate, or to not participate, in this research study, will have no impact on my work in the WQSB.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks for participation in this study and I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks. There are no risks associated with involvement in this project aside from those experienced in everyday life. I have also been assured by the researcher that even though the focus groups will be recorded using a

digital recording device and pertinent quotes may be used in publications, my identity will not be divulged and, if selected, my quotes will be attributed to a pseudonym.

My participation in this research is completely voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any point. I can ask questions at any time, including during the research. I am also allowed to refuse to answer any questions. If I choose to stop participating, or refuse to answer certain questions, there will be no negative consequences. Given that focus group data are highly dependent on the overall discussion, it is not possible to remove the data if I chose to withdraw from the study.

Benefits: My participation in this study will help me to reflect on my experiences with the Coaching and Mentoring Program. This may help me to ratify or strengthen my personal teaching philosophies. My participation may also serve to benefit and improve the CMP and the effective implementation of future coaching and mentoring programs.

Confidentiality: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for the development of a manuscript for research publication and that my confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms and the protection of the raw data in a secure office. The school board name will be revealed in resulting publications.

Anonymity: Because of the nature of a focus group, it will be impossible to ensure my anonymity throughout the study. However, though my participation within the focus group may expose my identity to other participants, I have received assurance that all participants will be reminded about the importance of privacy and confidentiality of the data and other participants' identities.

Conservation of data: The data collected (the transcripts from the focus groups and the audio-recording converted into a mp3 file) will be kept in a password protected USB storage device, in a locked office at the University of Ottawa. The original audio-recording will be destroyed once the recording has been transferred and transcribed. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the data. The data will be conserved for a period of ten years following completion of the study, after which the data will be destroyed.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this research.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. I understand that although the researcher of the study is a part-time consultant for the school board, I am under no obligation to participate and I am encouraged to reflect critically on my experiences. The data will not be used to evaluate my work as a mentor-coach. Given that focus group data are highly dependent on the overall group discussion, if I choose to withdraw, the data will not be removed.

Acceptance: I _____ agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Trista Hollweck of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Dr. Ruth Kane of the same faculty and institution.

I wish to participate in the focus group session and give permission to be audiotaped

I agree to respect the confidentiality of the members of the focus group and I will not discuss the content of the discussions outside of the group.

Note: If you do not wish to participate in this research study, you do not need to complete this form.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or their supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact:

Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research,
University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall,
550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Tel.: (613) 562-5387 Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

I acknowledge that my signature signifies my consent to this study. Please keep one copy of this consent form for your own records.

Appendix G: Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Protocol Guide

This protocol was used with six stakeholder groups: Mentor–Coaches, Teaching Fellows, Administrators, School Board Personnel (TIP team, consultants) and the WQTA (Union) executive.

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this focus group. I understand that your time is valuable and there are many demands on your schedule. I appreciate you spending the following hour and a half with me.

Today we are going to discuss the WQSB's Teacher Induction Program (TIP). I am grateful to _____ for agreeing to act as moderator as I take notes and observe. This research project examines the experience of mentor–coaches involved in the TIP in the WQSB. As such, your discussion will be very valuable to me.

The first 45 minutes is focused on how being part of the TIP may or may not impact the professional learning, practice, and well-being of the mentor–coach.

- 1) Tell us your name and your involvement with the Coaching and Mentoring Project.
- 2) When you hear the word mentoring, what comes to mind?
- 3) When you hear the word coaching, what comes to mind?
- 4) What are the essential qualities of a good mentor–coach?

- 5) What impact (if any) has the TIP had on you personally?
- 6) The second 45 minutes is focused on how the TIP impacts the culture of the WQSB.
- 7) In your opinion, what are the goals of the TIP in the WQSB?
- 8) In what ways (if any) has the TIP impacted your school?
- 9) In what ways (if any) has the TIP impacted the WQSB as a district?
- 10) Have we missed anything?

Appendix H: Year 1 Teaching Fellow Questionnaire

The study questionnaires used the platform available from fluidsurveys.com. Each section has its own topic and participants responded to questions using an attached likert scale described by: Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neutral/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree

OPENING QUESTIONS

- 1) I knew that the NTPs has three (3) separate components: Professional Development, the Coaching and Mentoring Program (CMP) and Evaluation.
- 2) My administration was supportive of the NTP

Comments:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1) The professional development offered to the teachers new to WQSB is useful.
- 2) The resources provided to me were useful.

Comments:

THE COACHING AND MENTORING PROGRAM

- 1) Having a mentor-coach was a positive experience for me.
- 2) The support from my mentor-coach was useful.
- 3) My mentor-coach has helped me to become a part of the school team.
- 4) Working with my mentor-coach promoted my professional growth.

8 The NTP refers to the New Teacher Program which has since been changed to the Teacher Induction Program (TIP)

- 5) Working with my mentor–coach had a positive impact on my classroom practice.
- 6) I had an opportunity to meet with other teachers new to the WQSB and/or mentor–coaches in my school/region to build a learning community.
- 7) I would have liked to have met with my mentor–coach more often.
- 8) I would have liked to meet with my mentor–coach less often.
- 9) I feel that through the coaching and mentoring process, I had an impact on my mentor–coach’s professional learning and practice.
- 10) The term reflections I wrote to my mentor–coach promoted meaningful and relevant reflection about my practice.
- 11) Feedback from my mentor–coach helped me reflect on my professional practice.
- 12) The opportunity to observe the classroom practice of other teachers was useful.
- 13) The 2 M&M (mentor/mentee) days were useful in promoting professional growth.
- 14) The coaching and mentoring process should continue.
- 15) I felt that there were options available to me if the coaching and mentoring relationship was challenging.
- 16) I met with my administration to discuss my goal setting and professional growth multiple times throughout the year.

Comments:

EVALUATION

The Professional Growth Portfolio

- 1) I understand the purpose of the Professional Growth Portfolio.
- 2) I understand my administrator’s expectations for the Professional Growth Portfolio.

- 3) I found the development of the Professional Growth Portfolio was overly stressful.
- 4) A check-in on my Professional Growth Portfolio with my mentor–coach in January was helpful.
- 5) My mentor–coach supported me in the development of my Professional Growth Portfolio throughout the year.
- 6) My administration reviewed my Professional Growth Portfolio throughout the year.
- 7) The Professional Growth Portfolio professional portfolio is a useful tool in supporting reflective practice and demonstrating professional growth.
- 8) I felt that I had options in the way that I developed my Professional Growth Portfolio.

Comments:

Formal Observations

- 1) I was observed multiple times throughout the year by my administration.
- 2) The feedback from my administration’s formal observations was useful.
- 3) The formal observation by the NTP team was overly stressful.
- 4) I appreciated having my mentor–coach as support during my formal observation with the NTP.
- 5) The feedback for growth from the formal observation by the NTP team was useful.

Comments:

Appendix I: Year 2 Teaching Fellow Questionnaire

The study questionnaires used the platform available from fluidsurveys.com. Each section has its own topic and participants responded to questions using an attached likert scale described by: Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neutral/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree

OPENING QUESTIONS

- 1) I knew that the NTP has three (3) separate components: Professional Development, the Coaching and Mentoring Program (CMP) and Evaluation.
- 2) My administrator was supportive and involved in my growth as a second-year teacher.

Comments:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1) The PD sessions for second year teachers were useful.

Comments:

THE COACHING AND MENTORING PROGRAM

- 2) My former mentor–coach stayed connected to me throughout the year, offering informal support in a mentoring and coaching role.
- 3) I think second year teachers should be able to CHOOSE a mentor–coach and participate in a formal mentoring and coaching relationship which would include M&M days (similar to first year teachers).

Comments:

EVALUATION

The Professional Growth Portfolio

- 1) I understand the purpose of the Professional Growth Portfolio.
- 2) I understand my administrator's expectations for the Professional Growth Portfolio.
- 3) I believe the Professional Growth Portfolio is a useful tool in supporting reflective practice and demonstrating professional growth.
- 4) I found the development of the Professional Growth Portfolio was overly stressful.
- 5) My administrator collected and read my Professional Growth Portfolio and provided me with relevant feedback.

Comments:

Formal Observations

- 1) I was formally observed multiple times over the year by my administration.
- 2) The feedback from my administration's formal observations was useful.
- 3) I was informally observed (pop-ins, walkthroughs) multiple times over the year by my administration.
- 4) The formal observation by the NTP team was overly stressful.
- 5) I felt the feedback from my formal observation conducted by the NTP team was valuable and helped me to grow in my teaching.
- 6) All formal observations should be discussed as successful / unsuccessful rather than sharing the rating on a five-point scale that is currently in place in Year Two.

Comments:

Appendix J: Mentor-Coach Questionnaire

The study questionnaires used the platform available from fluidsurveys.com. Ea section has its own topic and participants responded to questions using an attached likert scale described by: Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neutral/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree

OPENING QUESTIONS

- 1) Why did you agree to become a mentor–coach?
- 2) What value (if any) does being a mentor–coach bring to you?
- 3) I knew that the NTP has three (3) separate components: Professional Development, the Coaching and Mentoring Program (CMP) and Evaluation.
- 4) My administration was supportive of the NTP.
- 5) I believe all teachers can become effective and grow.

Comments:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1) The professional development days offered to mentor–coaches this year were useful.
- 2) The resources provided to me were useful.
- 3) I would like more training on mentoring and coaching skills and strategies.

Comments:

THE COACHING AND MENTORING PROGRAM

- 1) I enjoyed being a mentor–coach this year.
- 2) The coaching and mentoring experience promoted my professional growth.
- 3) The coaching and mentoring experience improved my classroom practice.

- 4) I found observing my mentee's practice a useful process.
- 5) I found my mentee observing my practice a useful process.
- 6) I am comfortable doing informal observations and providing feedback for growth.
- 7) I am comfortable doing formal observations (using the PRO Teaching Tool) and providing feedback for growth.
- 8) I find the 2 M&M (Mentor/Mentee) days useful in promoting professional growth.
- 9) The relationship(s) I developed with my mentee(s) was / were positive.
- 10) I would like to continue to work in school mentoring and coaching communities to better support our new teachers in a collaborative way.
- 11) I felt supported by the Coaching and Mentoring Program team.
- 12) Teachers new to the WQSB in Year 1 should continue to be supported by a mentor-coach.

Comments:

Reflective Practice

- 1) My personal reflection writing helped me to grow professionally.
- 2) The support I received from the CMP team helped me to grow professionally.
- 3) The coaching and mentoring process has made me a more effective and reflective practitioner.
- 4) The reflections from my mentee(s) focused my support and coaching practice.
- 5) The Coaching and Mentoring Program has made my mentee a more effective and reflective practitioner.

Comments:

The Coaching Process

- 1) Having structured coaching sessions promoted professional growth for my mentee.
- 2) The GROW process was useful as a framework to guide the formal coaching sessions.
- 3) I have strategies to help my mentee(s) develop in the 12 teaching competencies.

Comments:

EVALUATION*The Professional Growth Portfolio*

- 1) I understand the purpose of the Professional Growth Portfolio.
- 2) I have supported my mentee to develop their Professional Growth Portfolio.
- 3) I believe the Professional Growth Portfolio is valuable as a means to give teachers a voice in the evaluation process.
- 4) Administration reviewed my mentee's portfolio and goal-setting multiple times throughout the year.
- 5) I believe the Professional Growth Portfolio is a useful tool in supporting reflective practice and demonstrating professional growth.
- 6) A check-in on the Professional Growth Portfolio by the mentor-coach in January was helpful.
- 7) The Professional Growth Portfolio should continue to be a requirement of the NTP.

Comments:

Formal Observations

- 1) I enjoyed being part of the NTP formal observation process.
- 2) I felt that being part of the NTP observation process provided me with direction on how to support my teaching mentee's next steps for growth.

- 3) Having mentor–coaches involved in the formal observation process should continue.
- 4) Mentor–coaches should remain in a supportive role rather than an evaluative one.
- 5) All formal observations should be discussed as successful / unsuccessful rather than sharing the rating on a five-point scale that is currently in place in Year Two.

Comments:

Appendix K: Administrator Questionnaire

The study questionnaires used the platform available from fluidsurveys.com. Each section has its own topic and participants responded to questions using an attached likert scale described by: Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neutral/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree

OPENING QUESTIONS

- 1) I was well informed of the expectations and requirements of the NTP

Comments:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 2) I was informed of the professional development offered to teaching fellows.
- 3) I was informed of the professional development offered to mentor-coaches this year.
- 4) The professional development offered is useful and supports the growth of the teaching fellows and mentor-coaches.

Comments:

THE COACHING AND MENTORING PROGRAM

- 1) The CMP helps the administrator in supporting teachers new to the WQSB.
- 2) The CMP supports professional growth for teaching fellows.
- 3) The CMP has made teaching fellows more effective and reflective practitioners.
- 4) The CMP promotes professional growth for the mentor-coach.
- 5) The CMP has made mentor-coaches more effective and reflective practitioners.
- 6) Year 1 teaching fellows should continue to be supported by a mentor-coach
- 7) I find the 2 M&M (Mentor/Mentee) days useful in promoting professional growth.

- 8) I meet with the mentor–coach throughout the year to discuss their coaching and mentoring experience.
- 9) Mentor–coaches should be chosen by the administrator.
- 10) I feel supported by the CMP team in promoting positive mentor–coach and teaching fellow relationships.
- 11) I have strategies that I can employ to enable me to respond to a challenging mentor–coach and teaching fellow relationship.

Comments:

EVALUATION

Overall,

- 1) The WQSB Teacher Induction Program helps the administrator in evaluating teachers new to my school.
- 2) I feel supported by the WQSB Teacher Induction Program team.

Comments:

The Professional Growth Portfolio

- 1) I understand the purpose of the Professional Growth Portfolio.
- 2) I understand how to use the Professional Growth Portfolio in the evaluation of teachers new to my school.
- 3) I find the Professional Growth Portfolio a useful tool in the evaluation process.
- 4) I shared my expectations for the Professional Growth Portfolio with the teaching fellows and the mentor–coaches.
- 5) The mentor–coach(es) supported their teaching fellows in the development of his/her/their Professional Growth Portfolio.

- 6) The mentor–coach(es) supported their teaching fellows in the development of his/her/their 12 professional competencies.
- 7) I met with the teaching fellows to discuss their Professional Growth Portfolio throughout the school year.
- 8) The Professional Growth Portfolio should continue to be a requirement of the WQSB Teacher Induction Program.

Comments:

Formal Observations

- 1) I am comfortable doing formal observations (using the PRO Teaching Tool) and providing feedback for growth.
- 2) I think the formal observations by the WQSB Teacher Induction Program team are useful for me as an administrator.
- 3) I think that having the WQSB Teacher Induction Program team do formal observations with administration in year 1 should continue.
- 4) I think that having the WQSB Teacher Induction Program team do formal observations with administration in year 2 should continue.
- 5) All formal observations should be discussed as successful / unsuccessful rather than sharing the rating on a five-point scale that is currently in place in Year Two teaching fellows.
- 6) I value the participation of mentor–coaches as part of the formal observation process.
- 7) Having mentor–coaches involved in the formal observation process should continue.
- 8) Mentor–coaches should remain in a supportive role rather than an evaluative one.

Comments: