CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Balancing Two Worlds: Culture and Its Role in the Mentoring Process

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

By

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Dedication

When thinking of who inspired me the most in attempting this arduous project, one group of collective individuals come to mind and that is the immigrants that have passed through my life and inspired me. This includes the almost twenty years of immigrant students who walked through my room while I was employed as a classroom teacher. These young students not only had to learn a new language and keep up with the curriculum, but had to adapt culturally as well. In this group of immigrants also lie my parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and dear friends who too left their land of birth and everything familiar to them, confronted challenges in their new adopted home, and endured through hard work and dedication. Adopting a new home did not mean casting away the rich cultural traditions that they brought with them. I am thankful for this because I was blessed having been raised in a cornucopia of rich cultures and traditions. You have all inspired this native born Angelino and I thank you for this.

There are so many others whose contributions to my life have led to this point and I will attempt to properly recognize them. To my doctoral cohort at CSUN, I have learned much during our three years together and I am grateful to have met all of you. My doctorial and work colleague, Dave Harris, has been my *nudge* since the onset of this journey; if it had not been for his collaborative spirit and persistence on meeting most every Sunday, I am not quite sure I would have completed this dissertation journey. And of course, this dissertation could never have been written without the support of my dissertation chair, Dr. Jody Dunlap. Thank you for always encouraging me, responding to my many emails, keeping me grounded, and reminding me that there was a light at the end of the tunnel. My director at LAUSD, Janet Peaks, plucked me from the classroom

and convinced me that I was now ready for become a teacher leader. She inspires and supports me every day and I thank her for this. Dr. Carrie Rothstein-Fisch served on my dissertation committee but long before that she gave me the opportunity to be a teacher-researcher. She visited my classroom almost 20 years ago and convinced a 4th grade bilingual teacher that he was not just a teacher, but a teacher researcher. Carrie's project, Bridging Cultures, influenced me tremendously back then and continues to do so two decades later and many students and beginning teachers have benefitted as a result of this initial visit. Thank you Carrie for bringing me on to your collective family of researchers. Now it up to me to pass the baton.

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Abstract

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Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

The purpose of this study is to understand the role culture plays in the beginning immigrant teacher/mentor relationship. Specifically this study will explore what tools assisted and what barriers faced beginning immigrant teachers in their new settings. Data will be obtained through in depth interviews with Asian and Latino, immigrant, beginning math or science high school teachers as they participated in a mentoring program during their time in induction. This study's central research question is: How does culture play a role in the beginning immigrant teacher (BIT)/mentor process? According to Fee (2010), in order for school districts and universities to provide proper

support for immigrant teachers, it is important to know the range of issues that these teachers face. Lack of proper support can distract these teachers from effectively teaching their students. Iredale (2001) also suggests that understanding the unique perspectives of minority teachers is important in creating and implementing more effective programs for recruitment, mentorship, and professional development of such teachers. Therefore, this research is important because there is a need in better understanding how culture plays in role in the mentor/beginning teacher relationship and how it can impact the effectiveness of the mentor-training program, which directly impacts teacher performance and ultimately student achievement. Thus, this study will contribute professional knowledge to the field of mentoring.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Teacher Attrition

For the past two decades, there has been a national concern for the teacher shortage in the United States. One reason for this decline in numbers has been linked to teacher attrition. Ingersoll and Merrill (2010) found that teachers leave the profession in rates higher than other professions like lawyers, engineers and professors. Teachers in California have nearly six times the attrition of other state workers such as police officers and firefighters (CFTL, 2011). Teacher turnover rates increased 31% from 1988 to 2004 for first-year public school teachers. Of those who quit the profession, half fail to complete their first year of teaching according to Danielson (2002). Tillman (2005) cites that this departure from the profession has been linked to poor working conditions, low salaries, minimal support from administration, and retirement. Feiman-Nemser (2003) found that "beginning teachers have legitimate unrealized learning needs that do not surface until the beginnings of stand-alone teaching" (p.26). Those unrealized learning needs can impact an early decision to quit the profession. Novice teachers also cited a lack of administrative and collegial support, budget support and constraints, and a flagging sense of personal teaching efficacy as reasons for leaving the classroom (Woods & Weasmer, 2002).

Nationally, 1.6 million teachers are set to retire in the next decade (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning (CFTL) published a study conducted in California that found that in 2009-10, 32% of teachers were over 50 years of age, which means that 1/3 of teachers, could be on their way to retirement in the next ten years. According to the district data of Yangna Unified

(pseudonym), a large urban district where this study takes place, for every teacher under the age of 25, there are more than 19 teachers older than 56. Additionally, nearly half of the district's teachers, 49.4%, are older that 46, while 15.5% are younger than 36. This leaves Yangna Unified with an aging workforce (Himes, 2015).

Another reason for the teacher shortage—both immediate and impending—is the low number of enrollees in teacher preparation programs. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) issued 11,497 new credentials in 2013-14. This represents a 30% decrease over the past five years in the number of new teaching credentials issued (CCTC, 2013). In addition, enrollments in collegiate teacher-preparation programs have declined by 75% in the last decade (Freedberg, 2014). According to the U.S. Department of Education's longitudinal study (2009), of those who do become certified and are consequently qualified to teach, 23% chose not to teach within a year of graduation. The statistical significance of teachers leaving the profession should be especially alarming since the projected growth of students in California alone is projected to grow to more than 230,000 by 2018-19 (CFTL, 2011).

This situation is not endemic to California alone. According to the Department of Education's Nationwide Listing of Teacher Shortage Areas, teacher shortage issues exist in all 50 states especially in the areas of math, science, special education, and teaching English language learners (U.S Department of Education, 2015).

Teacher Recruitment and Placement

With data showing that up to 20% of beginning teachers leave the profession nationally within the first five years, coupled with projected high retirement rates in the next decade, recruiting and retaining new teachers is a looming problem facing the

United States (U.S Department of Education, 2015). A specific aspect of the recruitment problems has been pointed out by Roza and Hill (2004) who state that high-poverty, low performing schools have more difficulty attracting and hiring teachers and receive only a fraction of the applicants that wealthier schools do. Ingersoll (2004) cites that high poverty urban schools lose 22% of their teachers annually compared with only 12.8% in low poverty schools. Forty-five percent of all public school teacher turnover occurs in one-fourth of public schools. Most of these school are high poverty schools—that have a larger concentration than the state average—of students who are of color, low achieving, and learning English as a second language (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Unfortunately, the predominately minority students who attend these high-poverty, low-performing schools, are far more likely than their wealthier peers to have a disproportionate number of inexperienced teachers and administrators. Thus, minority students bear the brunt of staffing inequalities (CA Department of Education, 2003).

These schools have high turnover rates of their teaching force and therefore have a disproportionately high percentage of beginning teachers. Many of these beginning teachers are immigrants. According to the Foreign Labor Certification and Data Center, approximately 19,000 foreign teachers were working on temporary visas in the United States in 2007. In California, that number is slightly over 2,000. According to the American Federation of Teachers (2013), teachers from overseas are being recruited from nearly all corners of the globe primarily to fill hard to staff subjects such as math, science, special education and language, as well as both foreign and English as a second language courses. Projections are that this number of foreign teachers in the United States is steadily rising. According to Bartlett (2012), California's foreign teachers alone

represent over 114 different countries. Teachers are being primarily recruited from the Philippines, Canada, Spain, India, Mexico, and England.

Using foreign teachers working on a visa is a small number compared to the number of immigrant teachers working in classrooms in the United States. No accurate data are available on immigrant teachers employed in classrooms in the United States, because the numbers tend to get confused by teachers who are already here as residents or citizens—having either married an American or otherwise completed the immigration process.

The Effects of Teacher Attrition

Studies show that beginning teachers are often left to 'sink or swim' upon entering a classroom. New teachers are offered few supports to navigate through the hurdles of their new profession, particularly when they are placed in the low performing, hard to staff schools located in socio-economically depressed areas (Darling-Hammond, 2000). This lack of support not only affects the beginning teacher, but is likely to have negative repercussions on all students (Saffold, 2006). Even the most effective beginning teachers are likely to leave these high-need schools, and such decisions negatively affect student achievement (Henke, Chen & Geis, 2000).

As cited by Ingersoll and Smith (2004), schools are settings that require interaction among families, teachers, and students for effectiveness. High turnover rates can negatively affect the dynamic of those interactions due to instability, lack of coherence and low morale. Ingersoll and Smith (2004), further add that high levels of employee turnover in any field "…are both cause and effect of ineffectiveness and low

performance in organizations" (p. 31). Therefore, high attrition at schools prevents these crucial bonds from forming.

Futernick's study (2007) also found that teacher turnover undermines at-risk schools. He goes on to say, "The less tangible costs of teacher turnover are nearly incalculable in terms of the negative impact that the churning of teachers and the loss of teacher experience has on the instructional continuity of a school. The very fact that so many teachers flee certain types of schools should serve as an unambiguous signal that something about these schools' work environment is wrong and needs to be fixed" (p.1).

The Cost Factor

There are also cost factors that must be considered when beginning teachers leave the profession, yet this is rarely mentioned in the literature. Districts spend millions recruiting, hiring, and training teachers. When they leave, the district loses that investment and must recruit, hire, and train another new teacher. For example, the Chicago Public Schools lose on average between $76-$128 million due to yearly attrition (Shernoff et al., 2011). Like many other states, California suffers inordinate fiscal losses from teacher turnover due to costs associated with recruitment, screening, and teacher preparation (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). According to social action network, Take Part (2011), the national cost of teacher turnover across districts is $2.2 billion annually. Beginning teacher supports, such as effective mentoring programs, that provide assistance to new teachers so that they remain in the profession, can be costly initially but save states millions in the long run (Phillips, 2015).

Beginning Teacher Supports

Individual states have tried to retain their teachers by introducing various supports by means of providing induction programs (United States Department of Education, 2004). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) state: “Theoretically, induction programs are not additional trainings per se but are designed for teachers who have already completed basic training. These programs are often conceived as a bridge, enabling the ‘student of teaching’ to become a ‘teacher of students’ ” (p. 683). An induction program is important because during the transition from apprentice to practitioner, beginning teachers are provided the opportunity to apply what was learned during their pre-service training while being assessed and assisted by a mentor teacher.

Researchers have pointed out challenges associated with teacher induction programs as they pertain to the success of immigrant teachers (Doerger, 2003). Doerger (2003) argues that while each school may have its own unique culture, most teacher induction programs tend to employ a uniform, 'one-size-fits-all' strategy that is unlikely to be effective for all schools. While teacher induction programs may share common traits, they also have broad differences with respect to the specifics of their implementation. Since only the broad induction concepts can be universally applied, it is recommended that school districts and schools must take into account the unique demands and limitations of each school’s organizational culture and environment (Mulder, 2009)

Mentors

A study conducted by Hutchinson (2005), found that effective mentoring can significantly improve the immigrant teachers ability to adapt culturally, thereby increasing their classroom effectiveness. Having someone to help guide the newcomer

through the new local school culture and best practices has shown to be very beneficial. Ingersoll (2015) further states that offering induction programs and assigning mentors to beginning teachers enable these novices to refine their teaching practices. In addition to accelerating teacher effectiveness, mentors and induction programs lower teacher attrition rates. This study also showed that retaining well-supported teachers had a positive correlation to student achievement (Phillips, 2015).

Hutchinson and Jazzar (2011) say that the relationship between the mentor and the beginning immigrant teacher should be viewed differently from similar mentoring relationships with native-born beginning teachers. The authors found that beginning teachers new to the United States need support with cultural and social adjustment and the pedagogical implications inherent to a different culture. Yet according to Bartlett (2014), these immigrant teachers receive the same mentor support that other beginning teachers get.

Immigrant Teachers

Most beginning teachers are from within the United States, but many also come from other countries such as the Philippines, India and Mexico (Bartlett, 2014). Thousands of foreign teachers have been filling teacher positions in US classrooms, driven by a shortage of American teachers, especially after the passage of NCLB in 2001, which mandated that students be taught in high needs areas such as math, science and special education (Niiler, E. 2012).

Consequently, the main emphasis for teacher recruitment was placed on content area proficiency and qualifications, with little attention paid to other areas such as being knowledgeable about schools in the United States, particularly at the operational level.

Mentors can help novice teachers with this cultural transition, but the mentor may not necessarily have received the necessary training in providing the newcomer cultural and social adjustment support. Not only do immigrants experience difficulties with this cultural transition, but this may also be an issue for immigrants who are now citizens or residents of the United States. This includes being cognizant that cultures have different value systems and that differences exist between collectivistic and individualist countries. Given the large number of immigrant teachers working in the United States, and the gap in the field literature on this topic, a study such as this one—exploring the phenomenon of culture and its role in the Beginning Immigrant Teacher (BIT)/mentor relationship—is critical.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative, grounded theory study was to discover the role culture played on the BIT/mentor relationship. Data was obtained through in depth interviews with various immigrant teachers currently employed in the Yangna Unified (pseudonym) school district, located in an urban area in the southwestern United States. According to Fee (2010), in order for school districts and universities to provide proper support for immigrant teachers, it is important to know the range of issues that these teachers face. Lack of proper support can distract these teachers from effectively teaching their students (Fee, 2010).

Significance

The problem this study addresses is the cultural barriers that BITs encounter in the school arena particularly during the mentoring process. This qualitative research study is important in the context of what is happening in the field for several reasons:

First, as I stated above, there is a gap in the extant literature on scholarship in this field. Specifically, there is a gap in the understanding of the cultural factors that influence the development and success of a BIT/mentor relationship; hopefully, an understanding that can then be materially applied. This research study examined the impact that culture has on the mentoring process between the mentor and the BIT in order to maximize the effectiveness of the BIT/mentor relationship. According to Smith and Ingersoll (2004) strong mentor-beginning teacher relationships impact teacher retention and effectiveness. For this reason, the training of mentors on how to most affectively work with this special population of beginning teachers is especially important because it will lead to an increase in teacher effectiveness, which directly impacts student achievement. Thus, this study will contribute professional knowledge to the field of mentoring.

Research Question

This study's central research questions is:

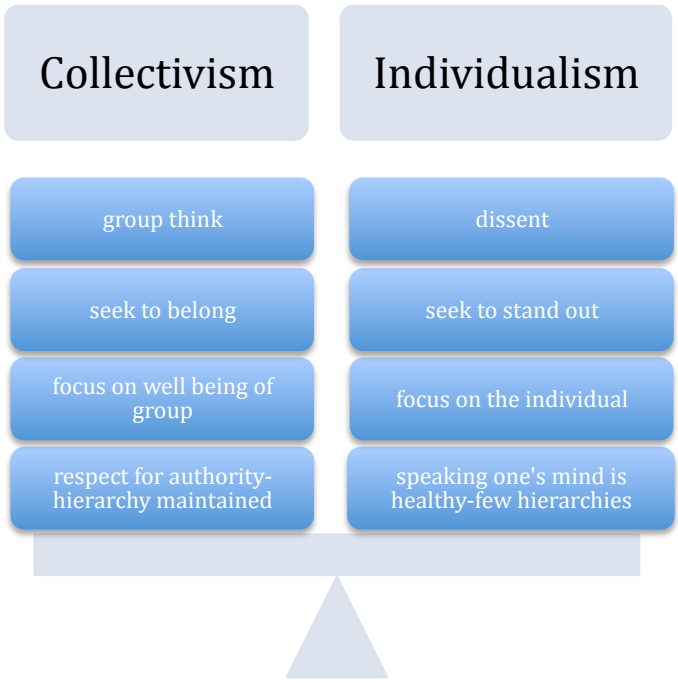
- How does culture play a role in the Beginning Immigrant Teacher (BIT)/mentor process?

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework that guided my study is rooted in an understanding of cultural values and is based on the principles of individualism and collectivism as articulated by Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield and Quiroz (2001). As implied by the terms themselves, individualism emphasizes individual success, and collectivism emphasizes the success of the group (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, et al., 2001). According to Hofstede (2001), the dominant culture of the United States is highly individualistic (Hofstede, 2001). However, 70% of the world's cultures can be described as collectivistic

(Triandis, 1989). Many of BITs working in US schools are from Latin American and Asian countries (Bartlett, 2014). Culturally, it is fair to say, these countries exhibit collectivistic qualities (Hofstede, 2001). Consequently, immigrant teachers from these countries often come with a cultural value system that is markedly different from that of their colleagues and their mentors in the United States. Thus both the mentor and the teacher must find a balance between, and understanding of, their respective cultural experiences in order to successfully navigate their new educational arena.

Figure 1.1



The conceptual framework presented above is therefore beneficial for educators who work with immigrant cultures. This framework can be used to develop creative solutions to the challenges of cultural diversity by providing an understanding of why conflicts that may arise in the school arena between the BIT and colleagues, parents, administrators and the mentor teacher. These understandings can influence the

development and success of a BIT/mentor relationship. Understanding how value systems can influence communication between a mentor and a BIT will shed light on the steps that need to be taken in order to minimize misunderstanding and maximize effective communication. The latter is the key to an effective mentoring relationship, and also a foundation to accelerating new teacher practice and ultimately increasing student learning.

Overview of Methodology

This was a qualitative study. As cited by Morrow and Smith (2000), "The purpose of qualitative research is to understand and explain participant meaning" (p.211). More specifically, Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as "… an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting" (p.15). Since this study focused on a person's cultural background, and the effects of that background on communication practices, a qualitative method was appropriate because such an approach is specifically aimed at exploring social and human problems. Qualitative research has been an ideal tool in multicultural counseling research. Morrow, Rakhsha and Castaneda (2001) provide several reasons for using qualitative research to study multicultural issues. Qualitative research is able to capture the nuanced meanings that emerge, particularly of the participants' experiences, which are generally not conducive to being examined using quantitative methods.

Site and Instrumentation

The setting of this study was a large, urban school district, Yangna Unified

(pseudonym) located in the southwestern United States. The data collection instrument consisted of 12 interviews that yielded rich and detailed data relevant to the specific concerns of this study.

Participants for the Study

Beginning immigrant teachers were the focus of this study, because their experiences reflect the role of culture, and specifically how the dominant culture of the United States mediates the BIT experience. The study was purposeful and criterion-based because I intentionally interviewed immigrant, Asian and Latino teachers who taught either science or math at the secondary level and had completed or were still participating in induction.

Interviews focused on questions pertaining to the beginning teacher's background, how they saw the mentoring process, their relationships with their colleagues and mentors, and how they navigated their new school arenas.

Definitions of Terms

A Beginning Immigrant Teacher (BIT) is defined as a teacher who was not born in the United States.

A Beginning Teacher is defined as an educator who has a preliminary credential and is beginning or has completed induction, which will or has provided him or her with a clear credential.

Culture is defined using Lindsey's (2009) definition, which is "the set of practices and beliefs that is shared with members of a particular group that distinguishes one group from others" (p.11).

Immigrant: a person who migrates to another country, usually for permanent residence.

Individualism and Collectivism: Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield and Quiroz, (2001) define the principles of individualism and collectivism as, "The continuum of individualism/collectivism represents the degree to which a culture emphasizes individual fulfillment and choice versus interdependent relations, social responsibility, and the well-being of the group. Individualism makes the former a priority, collectivism the latter" (p.4).

Induction**:** is the support and guidance provided to novice, credentialed teachers and school administrators in the early stages of their careers. Induction encompasses orientation to the workplace, socialization, mentoring, and guidance through beginning teacher practice (Moir, 2006). An induction program can refer to a variety of different activities like classes, workshops, orientations, seminars, and mentoring (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004).

Mentor**:** Mentors are experienced individuals who are willing to share their knowledge with someone less experienced in a relationship of mutual trust (Clutterbuck, 1992 as cited in Harrison, Dymoke & Pell, 2004). Mentoring is the process through which the mentor and the mentee make use of reflective methods and the practice of dissonance to create trust, build camaraderie, and engage in creative teaching strategies (Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002).

School Culture: According to Fullan (2007), school culture is the guiding beliefs and values of the school. School culture can be used to encompass all the attitudes,

expected behaviors and values that impact how the school operates which may be alien for the beginning immigrant teacher (Fullan, 2007).

Delimitations

This study was delimited to teachers who were currently participating or had completed their two years of induction and were born in either Asia or Latin America and taught science or math in a large, urban school district. It did not include native-born teachers because these teachers were probably schooled here and were likely to have adopted or adapted to the American culture of the school. Schools in the United States, according to Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield and Quiroz (2001) are individualistic. The findings of this study were limited to the personal recollections, feelings, and experiences of the novice teachers in one school district; therefore, results were not generalized to other populations.

Limitations

A limitation of my study was that some of my immigrant participants could have had some formal schooling here, which could have affected some of the outcomes of this study. Participants were selected through a random process with the expectation that the educational background of each participant would vary based on the country of birth and the number of years of his/her U.S. residency.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation was divided into five chapters. The first chapter provides a brief introduction about teacher attrition, government responses to the problem, the role of induction, mentoring, and immigrant teachers new to schools in the United States. These sections are followed by a statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the

study, the theoretical/conceptual framework used, overview of methodology, the study's limitations and delimitations. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review of the literature, which presents a critical synthesis of empirical literature that is relevant to the themes or variables utilized in this study and further justifies how this study addresses a gap in the extant literature. Chapter 3 situates the study in a particular methodological tradition, provides a rationale for this approach, describes the research setting, research methods, describe data collection and analysis. This chapter also includes the validation process used to increase the validity and reliability of the study, potential ethical issues, and the role and background of the researcher. Chapter 4 organizes and reports on the study's main findings, including the presentation of relevant qualitative data. The themes that emerged will be accompanied by quotes taken from the participants. Finally, Chapter 5 interprets and discusses the results in light of the study's research question, literature review, and conceptual framework, concluding with the strengths and limitations of the study, future research, and recommendations for policy and practice, such as action planning for educational improvement.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As stated in the previous chapter, teacher attrition is a national concern especially in urban, high poverty and low performing schools (Tillman, 2005). Filling hard-to-staff areas such as special education, math, science, foreign language, and bilingual instruction is daunting for many school districts especially since the passage of NCLB in 2001 that required all states that received federal funding to staff schools only with teachers who were deemed a "highly qualified teacher" (HQT), which meant that they were fully certified in their content area (Bartlett, 2014). Consequently, many school districts in the United States had to look outside their borders, as it were, for qualified teachers. This international search resulted in tens of thousands of immigrant teachers coming to teach in schools in the United States (Bartlett, 2014). In addition to these immigrant teachers recruited from abroad, many of the beginning teachers hired in the United States are also immigrants who reside here, and have participated or are currently participating in a district sponsored induction program.

Mentor Support

Many of these new, immigrant teachers are provided a mentor for support. Research shows that quality support in the form of mentoring from skilled veteran teachers is needed in order to retain these teachers (Bulloughs, 2012). Mentors are trained to accelerate new teacher practice, which leads to an increase in student achievement. This involves building resilience in beginning teachers in order to assist them in coping more effectively when encountering difficult situations. Research finds that having resiliency is fundamental to teacher effectiveness and survival (SMSA, n.d.). Parker, Ndoy, and Imig (2009) further add: "While it is vital to offer mentoring to novice

teachers, it is equally as important to improve the quality of these experiences to help new educators become more effective and reducing beginning teacher attrition" (p. 330). According to Ingersoll (2015), mentoring programs have been shown to positively influence beginning teachers' decision to remain in teaching.

Despite this support, many immigrant teachers leave the profession within the first few years (Bartlett, 2014). Hutchinson and Jazzar (2007) state that the mentor/beginning immigrant teacher relationship should be viewed differently from those relationships with native born beginning teachers. The authors found that new teachers to the United States need support with cultural and social adjustment as well as the pedagogical implications for educational settings. A study conducted by Fee (2010) found that mentoring assisted foreign-educated, immigrant teachers from Latin America in overcoming many of the obstacles they were confronted with in their new settings. He goes on to suggest several elements needed by foreign teachers to succeed, which include mentors who are well trained in meeting the needs of this special population. Yet according to Bartlett (2014), these teachers receive the same mentor support that other beginning teachers get, without any specific accounting for cultural differences.

Conceptual Framework

As noted previously, there is a critical gap in the extant literature on the ways in which culture affects the mentoring process. The theoretical framework that will guide my study is rooted in understanding differing cultural values and is specifically based on the principles of individualism and collectivism as articulated by Trumbull et al. (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield & Quiroz, 2001). Generally, individualism emphasizes an individual's specific success, and collectivism emphasizes the success of

the group. Other factors within the individualistic and collectivist dynamic include formality and respect, eye contact, personal space, and cooperation versus competition (Raeff, Greenfield & Quiroz, 2000). Despite the differences in nomenclature, it would be fair to say that no one is solely individualistic or collectivistic and people move along the continuum as time progresses and or other influences emerge and come into play. The degree of one's collectivism or individualism on the continuum is often influenced or determined by socioeconomic status, the level of formal education and whether the individual was raised in a rural versus urban environment (Greenfield, Trumbull, et al., 2006). Despite that the fact that the world seems to embrace individualism more, given the increase of global wealth, urbanization, technology, and an increase in the level of formal education, cross-cultural differences—consequently differences between individualist and collectivist approaches—still exist (Greenfield, 2009).

According to Hofstede (2001), the dominant culture of the United States is highly individualistic (Hofstede, 2001). However, 70% of the world's cultures can be described as collectivistic (Triandis, 1989). It should be noted, that many of the beginning immigrant teachers (BITs) working at schools in the United States are from countries in Latin America and Asia (Bartlett, 2014), and the culture of these countries is primarily collectivistic (Hofstede, 2001). These teachers often come with a cultural value system that is markedly different from that of their colleagues in the United States and their mentors must achieve a cross-cultural balance and understanding in order to avoid misunderstandings, which may adversely affect the mentoring process.

Thus the conceptual framework I have chosen to utilize for this study is particularly beneficial and efficacious for educators who work with immigrants with

different cultural perspectives. Therefore, my chosen framework can be used to develop creative solutions for the challenges of cultural diversity by providing an understanding of *why* conflicts may arise between the beginning immigrant teacher and colleagues, parents, administrators and the mentor teacher. These understandings can influence the development and success of a BIT/mentor relationship. Understanding how value systems can influence communication between a mentor and a BIT will shed light on what steps can be taken to minimize misunderstanding and maximize effective communication with is key to an effective mentoring relationship.

This framework also helps bridge gaps that sometimes exist among educators working in the school arena by focusing more on *why* something is happening rather than expending energy on a quick fix, which only addresses the problem for the moment, rather than looking at core causes. Raeff, Greenfield and Quiroz (2000) further state that building significant relationships begins with understanding the population or person with whom you want to build a relationship. Effective mentoring involves building these strong relationships. The chosen framework helps us to more clearly articulate why certain cultures function the way they do and provides insight into human interaction by helping people understand how behavior is rooted in particular values which can assist with effective communication.

Teacher Induction Programs

Researchers have pointed out challenges associated with teacher induction programs as they pertain to the success of immigrant teachers (Doerger, 2003). Doerger (2003) argues that while each school may have its own unique culture, most teacher induction programs tend to employ a uniform, "one-size-fits-all" strategy that is unlikely

to be effective for all schools. This literature review will analyze how the mentoring experiences between the BIT and mentor is affected by culture and how this "one-size-fits-all" approach may not be appropriate for BITs due to cultural differences.

The Effects of NCLB and the New Definition of 'Highly Quality Teacher'

The numbers of immigrant teachers increased dramatically as a result of the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. NCLB attempted to address disparities in teacher quality by requiring states that received federal funding to staff schools only with teachers who were deemed a "highly qualified teacher" (HQT), which meant that they were fully credentialed (NCLB, 2001). School districts could risk losing federal funding if they did not comply with these new regulations. All states were to be in compliance by 2006 (Darling-Hammond, 2000). In the past, lower performing, high poverty schools, many of which had problems with recruitment, had to employ non-credentialed teachers to fill its many vacant positions. Now with NCLB, they could no longer staff non-credentialed teachers and would have to look toward new markets to fill teacher vacancies. This left many districts across the nation rushing to ensure that each classroom was taught by a HQT. Many had to turn to overseas markets in order to fill these positions that could not be filled domestically.

Teach For America recruits recent liberal arts graduates and places them in hard-to-staff schools. Similar to district interns, Teach For America participants are also taking their educational coursework while teaching. Under this program, approximately 24,000 teachers have been sent to these schools in the past 20 years (Bartlett, 2014).

There has been much controversy regarding the effects of employing HQTs who are still non-certified. Studies show that students who attend high-poverty, low-

performing schools, are far more likely than their wealthier peers to have teachers who are non certified, inexperienced, out-of-field, and ineffective (NCLB, 2001). A large study conducted by Darling Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, and Heilig (2005) found that certified teachers consistently produced significantly stronger student achievement gains than non-certified teachers, which included Teach For America teachers.

Induction as a Means of Beginning Teacher Support

Instead of participating in structured induction and initiation processes, which are provided to other white-collar professions, many teachers have been left to work in isolation (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Improved support for beginning teachers became a matter of concerned practice for school districts across the nation—especially after the passage of NCLB—as a means of keeping teachers in the profession. NCLB also emphasized the importance of new teacher induction and as a result, these beginning teacher induction programs received considerable federal support (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) state: "Theoretically, induction programs are not additional trainings per se but are designed for teachers who have already completed basic training. These programs are often conceived as a bridge, enabling the 'student of teaching' to become a 'teacher of students' " (p. 683). An induction program is important because during this transition from apprentice to practitioner, beginning teachers are provided the opportunity to apply what was learned during their pre-service training while being assessed and assisted by a mentor teacher. The creators of NCLB felt that by having more experienced individuals sharing their experience with less experienced teachers and assisting them with the transition into the classroom, attrition rates among beginning teachers would go down. In other words, learning from experienced teachers

would help to make new teachers more successful, and consequently decrease attrition (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). After the completion of induction, which can last between one to two years, beginning teachers earn their professional clear teaching credential, which offers them the benefits of tenure and job protection. A national study conducted by Ingersoll and Smith (2004) surveyed over 3,000 first year teachers. The researchers found a strong correlation between the amount of support offered a beginning teacher and teacher attrition. Twenty-eight percent of first year teachers, who only received three induction supports, left teaching as compared to 18% of beginning teachers who received eight induction supports. Additionally, studies show that students who attend schools that have strong induction programs in place for their beginning teachers achieve higher results academically (Villar & Strong, 2007).

Two categories of support in immigrant teacher induction programs emerged from a Canadian study conducted by Mulder, (2009). The first support was at the school level, which includes teacher orientation and assigning novice teachers with a mentor; the second support was professional support, which she fond is positively correlated to both immigrant teacher success and the opportunity of a cultural exchange. Several of the challenges mentioned by participants in the Mulder study that could be addressed, at least in part, by induction programs included: inadequate knowledge of Canadian school systems and how to teach in Canadian schools; assumptions that could pose barriers for immigrant teachers; transitions into their new school cultures; and a lack of cultural integration between immigrant teachers and their students and the community at large.

Challenges of Immigrant Teachers

Of the limited research conducted on immigrant teachers, much focuses on countries outside of the United States such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and Israel (Epstein & Kheimets, 2000; He, 2002; Phillion, 2003; Thiessen, Bascia, & Goodson, 1996). In another study conducted in Canada, Arun (2008) found that, while most studies on immigrant teachers have identified barriers to employment for immigrant teachers, little scholarly research exists that has examined the stories of the immigrant teachers themselves, that is, the detailed accounts of what barriers these teachers encountered and what actions were taken to best overcome them.

According to Fee (2010), for school districts and universities to provide proper support for immigrant teachers, program developers and administrators must know the range of issues that these teachers face. Lack of proper support can distract these teachers from effectively teaching their students. Iredale (2001) suggests that in order to create and implement effective programs for recruitment, professional development and mentoring of immigrant teachers, understanding their perspectives and experiences is crucial. Arun (2008) further adds that immigrant teachers' experiences, pedagogical approaches and cultures are an important component of their performance because "teaching is a linguistically and culturally dependent profession" (p.2). Therefore, there is need to understand immigrant teachers' experiences, pedagogies and cultures more fully since they affect their teaching, which in turn impacts students' learning experiences.

In a qualitative study conducted by Fee (2010) over an eighteen-month period, 31 immigrant teachers from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Colombia and Spain were interviewed on the challenges these teachers faced upon arriving at a high-needs urban school district.

Challenges included areas pertaining to the personal—such as housing and transportation; professional—which included adjusting to teaching students at a different grade level; and obviously academic—which includes US teaching requirements, transcripts and visas. The beginning teachers were assigned other immigrant Latino teachers as mentors who provided much insight on, and assisted the new teachers with, many of the challenges they faced. All participants not only completed their year of teaching, but also obtained state certification and their master's degrees. Fee (2010) recommends in his findings that all foreign-educated teachers should all be assigned well-trained mentors upon arrival in the United States, but does not go into detail in terms of what this training looks like or what role culture plays in the mentoring process.

A study conducted by Hutchinson and Jazzar (2006), found that the traditional support provided to beginning teachers is not necessarily the most appropriate support for immigrant teachers, because they are not always new to teaching and have specialized needs. These teachers "…need cultural and social adjustment with pedagogical implications, not the basics on how to teach" (p.371). The research further adds that most of the immigrant teachers who are recruited abroad return home without having been able to culturally adapt to their American setting.

Cultural Conflicts

NCLB mandates content expertise but does not address other factors of teacher effectiveness, "… including the capacity to serve as a conduit to cultural capital, ability to attend the social and emotional development of children, ability to adapt pedagogical practice, and familiarity with the local context or awareness of culturally relevant pedagogy (Bartlett, 2014, p.37). When beginning teachers commence the mentoring

process, they are expected to navigate the culture of the school in addition to (sometimes) having to master the English language and its usage complexities.

Beginning teachers, whose culture is not aligned with the dominant culture found in the school, may experience conflict and the research would indicate, they often do (Pincas, 2001). This conflict is not just a result of different teaching styles, but may be a result of attempting to connect to both the local culture of the school, as well as navigate the learning environment. Cultural alignments are not an easy task to accomplish. According to Parrish and Linder-VanBerschot (2010), "cultural preferences are strongly embedded because people are highly social creatures with strong needs to fit within our groups" (p. 2). The researchers further say,

> "When we teach, we are teaching culture. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes are all manifestations of culture and are not immune to it. In addition, when we teach, we are not only disseminating what we know but how we come to know it as well as the basis for accepting it as useful knowledge, and the values these represent. Teaching and learning are not only embedded in culture, they are cultural transmission in action-the means to culture. In multicultural settings, this especially leads to the conundrum posed in the first section that educators must take responsibility to both acculturate students and in the process avoid cultural bias that could impede instructional goals" (p.3).

It is especially important for the mentor to be aware of what Parrish et al. are advocating for. Culture is many times taught to educators in isolation when in reality it is infused in all educational areas including content, pedagogy, and interacting with others such as students, colleagues, and parents. If teachers are not aware of culture's far-

reaching influence, they will rely on what is most familiar to them regardless of the possible change in setting. “Therefore, when cultural conflicts or clashes between two or more cultural systems are encountered in any setting participants will most likely revert to the past in their handling of intercultural conflicts” (Al-Issa, 2005, p.149). Many researchers have pointed out that when teachers practice in a foreign educational setting, the familiar becomes unfamiliar; they struggle with a host of difficulties due to differences in macro and micro cultural views of how teaching and learning should be conducted (Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, & Trumbull, 1999; Ortloff & Ortloff, 2003). Relying on familiar ways of doing things might ordinarily work in one’s home country but once people move to other countries or even encounter foreigners at home, those past and common experiences might not prove to be helpful at all. These encounters become more complicated depending on the amount of time and space of the interaction. When two cultures are forced to interact on a regular basis in an environment that is limited in terms of space and requires constant interaction, as in the classroom environment, friction may occur (Al-Issa, 2005).

According to Lewko (2009), differences in the cultural backgrounds of immigrant teacher and members of the school community may pose a challenge to BITs especially in regards to language, culture, and pedagogy. Carrison (2007) concluded that cultural differences, both in daily life and in pedagogy, might also impact the transition process into the classroom. In addition Dunn (2011) states that BITs struggle with the pain of separation from families and with issues of classroom management. In short, although many overseas trained teachers provide students in the U.S. with excellent instruction, the practice is fraught with difficulties.

While the presence of immigrant teachers in a school may add depth and breadth of perspective to both teachers and students, the transition process can also be fertile ground for misunderstanding and miscommunication as cited by Carrison (2007). She goes on to say that in addition to the accents and language differences they possess as bilingual immigrants, immigrant teachers bring differences in cultural perspectives as well. "These cultural perspectives encompass their preexisting educational paradigms as well as their cultural communication styles; in turn, these directly impact how they are perceived by others" (p. 239). Not only can this misunderstanding take place in the school arena by other educators but the role of culture has also been misrepresented in previous studies. One study conducted in California, advised caution in employing immigrant Latino teachers, finding that they often viewed school children from a deficit perspective rather than relating to them culturally (Valadez, Etxeberria, Pescador, & Ambisca, 2000). Thus, there is a need for building and developing social capital in the school community, which would include bridging the culture of the immigrant teacher with the culture of the school. Well-trained mentors can help create this bridge.

In a study conducted by Fee (2010), one teacher new to the United States mentioned the challenges of political factions in his school and trying to join the faculty community while avoiding taking sides. He found a radically different school culture—one that required the earning of respect rather than according it as professional courtesy, as is done in his country. One of his newly arrived colleagues had asserted: "We come from another country, and we show respect. However, you come here and you have to fight for that respect. And you have to earn it" (p. 397).

The same immigrant teacher mentioned how the freedom to create lessons and the need to set up centers for independent learning were both a puzzle he needed to work through. Teachers from Mexico are accustomed to receiving day-by-day lesson plans in large books distributed by the government. They would record what they taught from these lesson plans, after the fact. Once in the United States, these new teacher found that they not only had to create their own lessons, but were also responsible for establishing centers where small groups of children could work independently, as opposed to teaching them as one collective group. Fee (2010) goes on to say that teachers new to the United States also had to face the differing expectations of American parents and the lack of physical touching in American schools. One Latina teacher in the same study stated,

> "In Colombia, we teach them [the students] how to take a bath, how to take a shower, and how to wash their hair, how to sit at the table when having dinner . . . I am like a second mother. Here they don't want you to go there. They don't want you to go that far…. Here, the parents are expecting a lot more from us than they do in Mexico . . . They are expecting that you will teach them [the children] how to behave" (p. 400).

Researchers (Thomas, 1997; Dyer, 1998 among others) have cautioned about the danger of transferring educational views, ideas, and concepts to foreign classrooms, and emphasized the importance of cultural sensitivity towards the host culture (Sonleitner & Khelifa, 2004). According to Hall (1976), perhaps one of the most common misperceptions of some people when coming across new cultures is to conjecture that all human values and beliefs in the world are fundamentally the same. According to Hall (1976), this sets the two value systems on what he terms as a collision course. These

collisions occur frequently and in a variety of contexts and feelings of being misunderstood, misrepresented, and unappreciated may emerge. The role of teachers is to increase student achievement, which involves continual communication. But different cultures place emphasis on different ways to communicate, types of behaviors, and ways to interact. Therefore, understanding the role that culture plays is crucial to the learning process because cultural barriers may prevent this learning from taking place. These barriers can be mitigated when the new culture is orientated in a way that assists with the cross-cultural communication between teacher and students, teacher and peers, and teacher, and parents (Fitch, 1986). As a study by Maurice (1986) found, in order for teachers to most effectively communicate in school arenas where many cultures are represented, they must self-examine their own cultural assumptions and beliefs. "Students and teachers alike need to be able to anticipate culturally divergent styles of thinking and develop cross-culturally appropriate ways of handling troublesome situations that inevitably arise" (p. 43). Maurice further suggests that rather than ignoring the challenges that conflict presents, we need to face the conflict, analyze it, and then move toward turning it into cooperation.

Acculturation-Culture in the United States

There is extant, scholarly literature on the acculturation process that takes place with immigrant teachers. However, there is very little research specifically dealing with the mentoring process as it pertains to the acculturation process of immigrant teachers (Lee, 2011). Lee goes on further to suggest that all mentors and coaches should be well trained when working with immigrant teachers, but does not go into specifics as to what that training should or might look like. When immigrants arrive in the United States they

are expected to adapt to their new environment, learn a new language, and adopt values, beliefs, and customs of the new culture. The process of acculturation begins as soon as immigrants and their families come in contact with U.S. culture. For immigrant families living in the U.S. this adaptation process can be stressful and overwhelming (Rumbaut, 1997).

School Culture

Like individuals, institutions, such as schools, have cultural identities. According to the National School Climate Center (2014), positive school climates share certain common characteristics and are contributory to job satisfaction, morale, and effectiveness. These characteristics include: relationships and interactions that are defined by openness, trust, respect, and appreciation; staff relationships that are collegial, collaborative, and productive; staff members feel emotionally and physically safe; mistakes are not treated or seen as failures but as opportunities to learn and grow for both students and educators; and important leadership decisions are made collaboratively with input from staff members, students and parents. These institutional cultures of written and unwritten rules are important because BITs may have different cultural backgrounds as well as have worked in different cultural settings and must navigate both the cultural identities of the people around them and the cultural identity of school sites and districts (Bartlett, 2014). Understanding school culture and being able to navigate the school arena is crucial for teacher success.

Transitioning to a new work environment can be difficult, even for native-born beginning teachers. But for individuals whose ethnic values and traditions differ from those of the mainstream, it can be even more daunting. In a study conducted by Bartlett

(2014), Filipino teachers felt that the pedagogical practices as well as the norms of schools in the United States regarding student-teacher interactions were very dissimilar to those in the Philippines. Little and Bartlett (2010) further add that although some teaching skills transfer over from country to country, there are "…also significant pedagogical differences in expectations, approaches, norms, and interpersonal relationships between teachers and students" (p.111). They go on to say that these differences impact how teachers view effective practices. This can be confusing for beginning immigrant teachers because they may not even be aware that their practices may be deemed as ineffective by others in the school arena. Bartlett (2014) further states that teaching is not culturally neutral and that all teachers must be cognizant of, and take into account, the cultural differences around them. This cultural frame of reference is a stronger indicator of student success than knowing the academic content, the latter being the main emphasis of NCLB when it comes to defining what is meant by a High Quality Teacher (HQT).

History of Induction

Several programs have been put into place to assist teachers with a successful transition into the classroom. Improved support for beginning teachers became a concern and emphasis for school districts across the nation. Individual states have tried to retain these teachers by introducing new induction programs (United States Department of Education, 2004). Induction programs evolved in the early 1980s as a response to a greater teacher need spurred by an increase of student enrollment and teacher attrition. For example, in 1988 there were about 65,000 first-year teachers, but by 2008 the number climbed to almost 200,000 (Ingersoll, 2011). Induction programs continued to rise

throughout the 1990s and eventually became widespread as districts attempted to address teacher shortages (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). In 1991, about 61,000 first year teachers participated in an induction program. By 2008, the number reached to nearly 179,000. While teacher induction programs may share common traits, they also have broad differences with respect to the specifics of their implementation. Because only the broad induction concepts can be universally applied, according to Mulder (2009) school districts and schools must take into account the unique demands and limitations of each school organizational culture and environment.

Induction in California

In the 1990s, teacher preparation programs in California had been publicly cast as abysmal, so the California Commission on Teaching Credentialing (CTC) decided to construct a framework of standards that identify specifically what teachers must know and do (Hardy, 2001). It was the intention of the CTC, the Superintendent of Education and the Legislature to use the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTPs) as a basis for its induction program. The CTC wanted to ensure that regardless of the way in which a teacher obtains a credential, all beginning credentialed teachers would need to meet a minimum set of standards. The CTC, Superintendent of Education, and the Legislature wanted to use this statewide teacher induction program with the intent of providing all beginning teachers with high-quality support and assessment with the hopes of lowering teacher attrition, improving teacher effectiveness, and increasing student achievement (Hardy, 2001).

In 1998, the CTC sponsored legislation that restructured teacher credentialing in the state. Senate Bill 2042, which the governor signed into law in 1998, required that all

newly credentialed teachers complete a two-year induction/mentoring program. This law states that beginning teachers have to be provided intensive support and assistance so that their transition into the classroom is smooth and effective. The CTC included the use of ongoing formative progress assessment with frequent feedback in this induction program. Teachers who were to participate in induction included teachers with a California preliminary teaching credential and those who received their teaching credential out-of-state and have less than two years' experience. In addition, immigrant teachers have to meet the requirements of completion of the foreign equivalent of a U.S. undergraduate degree, completion of a teacher preparation program, and completion of a certain number of university-level credit hours in education. Most states will also require immigrant teachers to submit a credential evaluation report and may ask the immigrant teacher to take an English language proficiency exam (Shannon, 2008).

These identified groups of teachers would have to complete a second tier preparation program by enrolling in an induction program in order to earn a California Clear Teaching Credential. Although all teachers are required to enroll in an induction program, it was determined to allow individual districts to design this two-year support program. There is technical support provided by the State to assist universities and/or districts with writing their programs. The induction program receives state funding in order to provide the opportunity for beginning teachers to meet the requirements for a Clear Teaching Credential at no cost to the participant in the first two years of classroom teaching in the state (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). California funded this induction program through state grants and provided districts over $6,000 per year per teacher for induction (Howe, 2006, p. 290 as cited in Bullough, 2012). Though recently, this state funding,

which was previously allocated solely to induction, has been left to the discretion of each district on how to use it including funding non-induction programs (NTC, 2012).

Less than half of the state policies in the United States address the issue of assigning mentors to beginning teachers. Not only does California require all teacher induction programs to ensure that mentors are assigned to every beginning credentialed teacher but must do so within the first 30 days of initial teacher participation in the induction program (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin & Burn, 2012). California also requires that mentors receive initial and on-going professional development to make certain that they are well informed about the induction program and prepared for their roles as mentors. This training includes the development of knowledge and skills associated with mentoring, the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTPs), California Induction Program Standards, and the appropriate use of the instruments and processes of formative assessment systems (NTC, 2012). In addition, some induction programs use the Continuum of Mentoring Practice, which is aligned with the 2009 CSTPs and the Teacher Leader Model Standards. This continuum "… describes mentor knowledge, abilities, and dispositions that focus on advancing beginning teacher professional practice and promoting student learning" (NTC, p.2). According to element 1.6 of Standard 1, a mentor, "Draws upon the teachers' background and experiences to guide mentoring" (p.4). It goes on to further define an integrating/innovating teacher as one who, "Draws on thorough understanding to strategically support the teacher to utilize prior knowledge to guide and inform practice and advance student learning" (p.4). Despite being a formative self-assessment guide that a mentor may use to set goals, it is up to the mentor to seek professional development associated with the self-assessed need. But if the

mentor is not aware that cultural differences are affecting the mentoring process, he or she would not know that this is a need worth addressing.

Mentoring Programs

Although induction emphasizes beginning teacher supports such as professional development and networking, during the past two decades teacher-mentoring programs have become the dominant form of teacher induction (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Ingersoll and Smith (2004) further add that teacher mentoring has been identified as a necessary form of support for reforming existing teaching practices within the US context. Although much data exist regarding teachers who remained in education and participated in some form of induction, the data are not disaggregated to show retention rates for immigrant teachers.

Mentoring programs have been shown to positively influence beginning teachers' decisions to remain in teaching (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Several studies have examined mentoring programs across the United States. They found that teachers who receive induction and participate in induction programs have a higher probability of staying in the profession (Bulloughs, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). The strongest factors for teacher retention include: having a mentor from the same field, planning with other teachers who are teaching at the same grade level or the same subject, and collaborating and connecting with an external network of other teachers on a regular basis. Therefore, Ingersoll and Smith (2004) determined that when a teacher receives all or most of these aspects of mentoring, the retention rate is at the highest.

Types of Mentoring Programs

Induction and mentoring programs vary considerably from state to state but even

within states from district to district. Teacher induction programs can provide beginning teachers with support via workshops, orientation seminars, and one-to-one mentoring. Induction programs in some districts involve one orientation meeting held for beginning teachers at the beginning of the year; other districts require mentors and beginning teachers to meet regularly over a two-year period. Some induction programs assign mentors to only one beginning teacher while other programs assign one mentor to several beginning teachers. Several districts provide mentors with training, compensation, and time away from their teaching obligations to plan and meet with their beginning teachers while other programs do not (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

There are districts that assign beginning teachers to a full-release mentor, a teacher who is released from teaching classes and whose main responsibility is to assist beginning teachers on a regular basis. Other district programs may assign a beginning teacher to a mentor who may be teaching his or her own classes. This person may meet less frequently with the beginning teacher than in the case of the full-release mentor. Some mentors may have experience with the content and/or grade level of the beginning teacher, while others may not. Mentors are sometimes selected by the beginning teachers while staff elects others or are assigned by administration. Mentors can be retired or currently teaching. It is important when comparing and contrasting different mentoring programs to define what model is being used so that program effectiveness can be measured more precisely. The model this project will study is the full-release model. But Grossman and Davis (2012) declared that the mere presence of a mentor was not enough to adequately support a beginning teacher. To have effective mentoring Grossman and Davis (2012) listed three vital components, which include mentor training,

the focus on the teaching and learning of academic content, and allowing for sufficient time for the mentoring process to take place.

Mentor/Beginning Teacher Relationships

Tillman (2005) defines mentoring as a collaborative partnership in which individuals share and develop mutual interests. According to Ingersoll and Smith (2004), the main objective of mentoring programs is to give beginning teachers a local guide to help them navigate the new school arena. Katayama (2001) defines this guide as someone who inspires, helps, and shows the ropes of your surroundings in a new working environment. Schlichte, Yssel, and Merbler (2005) further elaborates on the role of a mentor by defining an effective mentor as "… one who nurtures and acts as a role model while reflecting on the five mentoring functions of teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling, and befriending." (p. 37).

Brooks (2000) states that, "…crucial to the success of the program is trust building. Over time beginning educators must develop trust in their mentor and trust in the process for it to work as it should." (p. 48) Building trust is emphasized throughout mentor trainings. Strategies for strengthening bonds between mentor and beginning teacher include being present in the moment, listening without judgment, seeking to understand, and viewing learning as mutual (New Teacher Center Formative Assessment and Support Guidebook, 2013).

Questions about the possible positive effects of quality mentoring relationships on the mentors in terms of day-today decisions, classroom practice, job satisfaction, enhancement of leadership skills, and improved practice has been emphasized in the literature (Hanson & Moir, 2008; Moir, 2009; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Feiman-

Nemser's study (2001) also found that the promise of the mentor lies not in the easing of a novice's entry into teaching but in assisting novices confronting difficult problems by practicing through dialogue. Discussing these situations with a mentor in a safe and non-threatening manner proved beneficial for the novice teacher. This goes hand in hand with Feiman-Nemser's study (2001), which found that the core principles of mentoring included "cultivating a disposition of inquiry, focusing attention on student thinking and understanding, and fostering disciplined talk about problems of practice" (p. 28). Through such programs, teachers learned effective teaching strategies and developed stronger classroom-management skills, often resulting in increased job satisfaction (Brewster & Railsback, 2001).

In a study by Jewell (2007), beginning teachers agreed that the most critical of several supports provided to them contributing to their success as first year teachers was their relationship with their mentor. These teachers reflected on their mentoring relationships and stated that they saw mentoring as a reciprocal process involving two willing partners, mentors and beginning teachers, in which both participants improved in making effective decisions, and grew as teachers. Because strong communication is essential in the mentoring process as stated by Jewell (2007), the ways in which the value orientations of different cultures affect the mentoring process is the focus of this study.

These definitions are important because they characterize the mentor's role as it pertains to the relationship he or she has with a beginning teacher. This collaboration between a beginning teacher and a mentor has been linked to improving beginning teachers' attitudes toward their daily work responsibilities, interaction with colleagues, and sharing examples of their planning, teaching and student work (Nielson, Barry &

Addison, 2007). More specifically, in addition to the dynamics of productive mentoring mentioned above, this study will examine how culture plays a role in a BIT's navigation in a new school arena including their relationship with their assigned mentor.

Beginning Teacher Benefits

Green (2006) goes on to further say that mentors are commonly tasked with providing beginning teachers with a structured means of examining their decisions that affect classroom practice with the goal of moving towards more effective decision-making. Through a structured system of support, beginning teachers have opportunities to reflect on their lesson planning, delivery of instruction, and use of various instructional strategies. As they reflect on their teaching, they seek guidance and support from their mentors. Mathur and Kim (2012) conclude in their study that effective teacher decision-making influences not only teacher practices in the classroom but also long-term decisions about remaining in the profession. When beginning teachers see themselves as better decision-makers and engage in more effective classroom practices, they may experience greater job satisfaction, improve their instructional capacity, and, in doing so, positively impact student achievement. The researchers further add that districts need to engage in continuous evaluation of their mentoring processes and mentor–beginning teacher relationships to provide the most effective support for all of their teachers.

According to Wang and Odell (2002), mentoring has also been identified as a necessary support for reforming existing teacher practice in the United States. These mentoring programs also provide support to beginning teachers such as assisting with classroom management, instructional strategies, analyzing data, and navigating school policies and procedures. Mentors also connect beginning teachers with resources and

colleagues (Saffold, 2006). In addition, Saffold's research shows a positive effect between mentoring and a teacher's self-efficacy. Eighty-four percent of those surveyed responded that their self-confidence improved as a result of having a mentor, and 95% believed that their teaching competence increased as well. The study emphasized the importance of increasing and emphasizing collegial support for beginning teachers, many of whom would otherwise work in isolation. As more school districts throughout the United States provide mentor teachers for their beginning teachers, the more educators need to know about how to ensure that the mentor-beginning teacher support program in use is the most effective. In this way, the likelihood of retaining effective teachers increases.

Mentors and the Role of Culture

As previously noted, culture plays a vital role in beginning immigrant teachers' day-to-day interactions within the school arena. Schools have cultures that are based on the norms, values, philosophy, and goals for educating students, as well as the influence of the community that it serves (Tillman, 2005). Beginning teachers need to be socialized into this new culture and mentoring can help beginning teachers learn about, adjust to, and become part of the new learning community (Wang & Odell, 2002). However, as I have stated before, very little research has been done on the mentoring process with immigrant teachers as it pertains to the dynamics of culture. In fact, a search in ERIC using the key words: mentor and culture produced only four articles from the last decade. Of these four articles, two dealt with countries other than the United States, one was about the experience of Latinos in college and another discussed Latina principals' experiences.

Fee (2010) suggests that all mentors and coaches should be well trained when working with immigrant teachers but does not go into specifics as to what that training looks like. He further adds that for districts and universities to provide proper support for immigrant teachers, it is important to know the range of issues that these teachers face. Lack of proper support can distract these teachers from effectively teaching their students. Without any preparation, an assigned mentor often becomes no more than a "buddy," someone who is available for advice and explaining school procedures, but formal visits to the new teacher's classroom and conversations about teaching and learning are not expected (Gordon & Maxey, 2000). In such a case, mentoring might improve retention, but we would not expect it to accelerate teacher growth and ultimately, student achievement (Stanulis & Floden, 2009).

As Hutchinson and Jazzar (2007) state, due to the increase of student enrollments, teacher attrition, the state mandates to reduce class sizes, and the "highly qualified teacher" requirements of NCLB, teacher shortages are a fact of life in the United States. Thus the selection, and training of mentors will become ever more important as more and more prospective individuals from other nations come to teach in our schools. Although California is considered one of the more supportive and progressive states with regard to beginning teacher supports, many of its mentor training programs do not take into significant consideration whether a teacher is native born and educated in the United States or if the beginning teacher immigrated here after having received his or her teaching credential abroad. Hutchinson and Jazzar (2007) go on to strongly advocate for a greater effort to support mentoring programs both for the interest of the immigrant teachers who move to the U.S. and for the benefit of the students they teach. If the state

believes in effective teacher support for all beginning teachers, then further research is warranted regarding the role of culture in the mentoring process.

But such an examination also involves self-reflecting on one's own culture as suggested by Thomas, Mitchell, and Joseph (2002). They further state that educators who work with beginning teachers entering the teaching profession should be aware of their own culture because their beliefs cannot be separated from their work and those beliefs will have a direct impact on the professional decisions that they make within the mentoring process. If building a relationship of trust and understanding is crucial for making an impact on teacher effectiveness and retention, then understanding one's belief and the beliefs of the beginning teacher is essential for this process. Only then can mentors serve as their guides and assist these teachers with the necessary cultural adjustments.

Parrish and Linder-VanBershot (2010) also note that instructional providers may assume that immigrant teachers need to be taught to adopt the new learning behaviors used in the United States in order to think and learn correctly. The authors state that educators may incorrectly assume that certain behaviors of immigrant teachers are a result of personality when in actuality the behavior is a result of culture. This is important for educators working with immigrant teachers to understand so as to avoid any assumptions of why someone is reacting a certain way or appearing resistant to adopting a different point of view as to prevent possible conflict.

Mentor-Beginning Teacher Barriers

This cultural conflict between mentor and beginning teacher can be lessened or magnified depending on the type of support offered by the mentor teacher. Mentors and

beginning teachers may not share common visions of teaching, learning, or views about their mentoring relationships (Wang & Odell, 2002). Many mentors receive training provided by the school and/or district. Some mentor training programs emphasize elements of individualism that place value on praise, oral expression, and independence But these individualistic elements can cause confusion for some beginning teachers who come from cultures that are more inherently collectivist and emphasize principles of helpfulness, listening to authority, and using criticism for normative behavior (Quiroz & Greenfield, 1996). Effective mentoring "…involves a shared vision of good teaching that guides the work of the mentor, an image of how beginning teachers learn to teach, a repertoire of mentoring strategies and skills, and adopting a stance of a learner" (p. 63) as cited by Feiman-Nemser (1998). But if the mentor's and BIT's visions are not aligned due to differences in cultural norms and values, the mentoring process can be hindered.

In addition, if cultural differences are hindering the mentor and beginning teacher relationship, beginning teachers, and subsequently their students, may not be receiving the vital support that they need. Iredale (2001) suggests that understanding the unique perspectives of minority teachers is important in creating and implementing more effective programs for recruitment, mentorship, and the professional development of such teachers. Therefore, there is a need to study beginning immigrant teacher experiences in order to positively affect their practices. In a study conducted in Canada, Arun (2008) asserted that immigrant teachers' life experiences, their pedagogies, and their cultures are especially important because "teaching is a linguistically and culturally dependent profession" (p. 2). Therefore, experiences, including successes and challenges, faced by immigrant teachers help bring to light realities of immigrant teachers' lives, which could

create pathways for other new and current immigrant teachers and mentors which in turn could lead to increasing student achievement.

Additionally, Griffin, Kilgore, Winn, and Otis-Wilborn (2009) add that more research is needed to better understand the preferences and perceptions of beginning teachers as they relate to beginning teacher decision making, classroom practices and mentoring variables. Culture, according to Young (2007), is overlooked as it pertains to ways of developing skills to assist with this merging of cultures with the goal of creating bicultural individuals. According to Nisbett (2003), educators who work with beginning teachers should be cognizant that the culture of the novice teacher and how those cultures manifest themselves in learning preferences.

Henderson (1996) goes on to state that "…educators working with beginning teachers should examine the assumptions they hold about how their learners will and should respond, keeping an open mind for potentially unexpected responses. Moreover, they must balance the need to help students adapt to specific professional, academic, and mainstream cultures and the need to embrace the culture in which the student is embedded" (p.93).

New Teacher Center

Mentors are trained through a variety of programs found nationally but the New Teacher Center (NTC) is one the largest and most significant in the state where this study takes place. NTC's teacher induction program includes the one-to-one mentoring of beginning teachers by experienced teachers who serve as full-release mentors. This study will examine the role culture plays in the beginning immigrant teacher and the full-release mentor relationship. NTC is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to

increasing student achievement by accelerating new teacher practice. NTC works with schools districts, state policymakers, and educators across the country to develop and implement induction programs aligned with district learning goals (NTC, n.d.).

Mentors also reflect, self-assess and set goals by using the NTC Continuum of Mentoring Practice, which is aligned with the state standards for the teaching profession and the Teacher Leader Model Standards. This continuum "…describes mentor knowledge, abilities, and dispositions that focus on advancing beginning teacher professional practice and promoting student learning" (NTC Continuum, p. 1). It presents a holistic view of mentoring and is based on these six professional standards:

- Facilitates and advances the professional learning of each teacher to increase student learning.
- Creates and maintains collaborative and professional partnerships to advance teaching practice and student learning.
- Utilizes knowledge of standards, pedagogy, and research to advance teaching practice and student learning.
- Promotes professional learning for teachers for continuous improvement and student learning.
- Uses assessment data to advance teaching practice and student learning.
- Develops as a professional leader to advance mentoring and the profession.

Mentors are carefully selected and rigorously prepared via NTC's series of trainings. These trainings teach mentors how to most effective use tools, which are templates that engage beginning teachers in discourse. In addition to the presentation of tools, mentors

are taught content, related to the field of mentoring, and are given other resources which are beneficial for accelerating new teacher practice and increasing student learning.

One NTC FAS tool is called *Knowing Teachers*. This tool is designed to support the mentor in learning about the beginning teacher's vision, strengths, needs, background, and preferences (NTC Guidebook, 2012). It is advised to use this tool in order to… "establish trust in the mentoring relationship; begin to know the teacher emotionally, instructionally, and socially; to gain information to plan strategic steps for the beginning teacher's continuous growth" (p. 43). In one section of the tool, the beginning teacher is asked to identify his or her preferences for learning and collaborating. While this may provide the mentor with some insight as to how to most effectively communicate with the beginning teacher, the questions and examples given in the guidebook are directed towards the preferred style of communication (email, phone, etc.), learning preferences (visual, auditory, etc.), most convenient times to meet, and the comfort level on receiving feedback. It is up to the mentor to modify this document in order to include possible cultural prompts that may him or her in understanding how culture may play a role in their mentor/beginning teacher relationship.

Summary

In summary, researching how culture plays a role in the mentor-beginning immigrant teacher relationship presents an opportunity for findings to emerge that will provide a new perspective that future mentors can learn from. The intention of this study is to explore this gap by specifically examining the role culture plays on the BIT/mentor relationship. Furthermore, this study intends to examine whether the support that these beginning teachers receive from their mentor is affected by the cultural differences that

exist between the mentor and the beginning teacher. This study will focus on this emphasis on practices and beliefs shared by members of a particular group, that is, immigrant teachers using the principles of individualism and collectivism to frame this study.

The more educators know about mentoring beginning teachers from all backgrounds, the better the chances of offering them the support that they need which in turn leads to higher teacher retention, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement. (Greenfield, 1994; Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 1989). Continuous evaluation of mentoring programs and mentor-beginning teacher relationships will provide the most effective support and stronger positive effects.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this grounded theory case study is to understand how culture plays a role in the beginning immigrant teacher (BIT)/mentor relationship. As a current mentor teacher, I see that there are times when misunderstandings arise between the mentor teacher and the beginning teacher—especially when the beginning teacher is from another country. Many of these misunderstandings can be traced to the mutual differences between their respective cultural norms and values. Iredale (2001) suggests that understanding the unique perspectives of minority teachers is important in creating and implementing more effective programs for recruitment, mentorship, and professional development of such teachers. Therefore, this research study is important because there is a need to better understand how culture plays in role in the BIT/mentor relationship and how it can impact the effectiveness of the mentor-training program, which directly impacts teacher practice and ultimately student achievement.

Research Questions

This study's central research question is:

- How does culture play a role in the beginning immigrant teacher/mentor relationship?

Chapter Organization

Following my introduction, I will discuss the research tradition that guides this study and why it was selected. I will then describe and justify the selection of my research setting. After describing the research setting and context, I will provide an explanation and justification of how the participants were selected for this study. The instrument used to gather the qualitative data for this study and the procedures on how the instrument was

used will follow. This section will be succeeded by an explanation of the data collection process including how, when, where, and by whom data were collected. Then the methods and technology used to analyze this data will follow. Finally, I will explain my role and the complexities that arose as a researcher in the planning and conducting of this study.

Research Tradition

The research tradition utilized in this study is known as grounded theory. "Grounded theory is not a theory in itself, but a methodology for developing theory that is 'grounded' in data" (Glesne, 2011, p. 21). Researchers use grounded theory to develop a general explanation that analyzes a process, action, or interaction among people and events that occur over time and pertain to a substantive topic (Creswell, 2012, Schram, 2006). This study focused on the actions and interactions between the mentor and the BIT and how culture played a role in this relationship. I used grounded theory because it connected to my study's purpose in that my research question reflects an interest in comprehending a process, which is mentoring.

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), the goal of grounded theory is to generate or discover a theory, which is grounded in the views of the participants. Research questions, in a grounded theory study, generally tend to reflect an interest in comprehending a process or change over a period of time. As participants were being interviewed and data collected, a theory emerged that helps to explain the particular practices being advocated for as a result of this study, as well as providing a framework for further research. In the grounded theory tradition, the researcher assumes that reality is socially constructed and is ever changing (Shram, 2006). This tradition is well suited to

answering my research question, which is focused on examining the experiences BITs have in regards to culture as it pertains to the mentoring process.

The data analysis procedures involved collecting the data, analyzing that data for themes and/or codes, connecting them to a theoretical framework, and then beginning the process all over again. Each time new data was introduced, new categories emerged, which modified the theory. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), this constant comparative method of data analysis, which is an ongoing comparison of data with emerging categories, is a primary characteristic of grounded theory. Another primary characteristic of grounded theory as cited by Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) as the "…theoretical sampling of different groups to maximize the similarities and differences of information. The objective is to generate theory from the data or modify or extend existing theory" (p. 33). In my study, the beginning teachers interviewed represented a variety of cultures. The data that I collected from them was used to locate similar patterns and/or differences, which allowed for a modified conceptual framework to evolve. This new framework, which emerged from this study, can be used to modify or enrich current studies regarding mentoring and the role of culture.

Research Setting and Context

District Setting

This study was conducted in a large urban school district, Yangna Unified (pseudonym), in the Southwestern United States. This district is comprised of about 75% Latino students, 10% African-American, 10% White, and 5% other ethnicities. Almost 30% of students are classified as English Language Learners and about 8% have an identified learning disability (83,000). The average age of its teaching force is 46 and

approximately 40% of teachers are White, 35% Latino, 11% African American, 10% Asian and 4% other. Yangna Unified loses approximately 7% of its teacher workforce each year (www.lausd.net, 2015).

Program Setting

The beginning teachers interviewed are participating in a two-year mentoring induction program called Supporting New Teachers (SNT) (pseudonym). The SNT program is designed to assist new teachers in clearing their preliminary credential and obtaining a clear state credential, while simultaneously accelerating new teacher practice and increasing student achievement. The state requires all credentialed teachers to clear their preliminary credentials, also known as a second tier, within the first five years of teaching. This second tier also applies for teachers new to the state regardless of having cleared their credential in their state. Foreign teachers may also have to go through this induction process if it has been determined by Human Resources that the training obtained in their home country warrants further support. Clearing a credential involves going through an induction process. This process involves several steps: one such step is having the beginning teacher go through an inquiry that involves planning instruction, teaching content, reflecting on what went well and what needed improvement, and applying modifications along the way. Currently, SNT has approximately 40 mentors assisting approximately 700 beginning teachers through this induction process. In addition to the 40 mentors, there is a director who is in charge of hiring, arranging for training, and providing resources for the SNT team. This director also serves as the liaison between the district and the nonprofit organization, the New Teacher Center

(NTC), which provides training for these 40 mentors as well as for other mentors nationwide.

SNT is relatively new to the district and is currently entering its fifth year. SNT originally serviced teachers only in certain geographic areas of the district but currently, SNT is providing mentors for beginning teachers working throughout the entire district. Many of these beginning teachers end up being placed in under-performing schools in lower socio-economic communities. SNT provides on-site mentoring by assigning a full time mentor for most of the district's beginning teachers who hold a preliminary credential. Mentors meet with beginning teachers for approximately 90 minutes per week, which includes an informal observation followed by a debriefing session. All mentor trainings use NTC resources. BTS's goal is to train mentors in ways that accelerate beginning teachers practice while increasing student achievement. My research study focused on how culture played a role in the BIT/mentor relationship. Therefore, BTS was directly related to my study because a major component of BTS training is learning how to build and support the beginning teacher/mentor relationship.

Creswell (2012) calls my site selection strategy 'homogeneous sampling' because I have selected certain individuals because they possess a similar trait or characteristic. This study involves interviewing beginning immigrant teachers who have either completed their first year of induction or have concluded their second tier. As stated by Creswell (2012), in lieu of studying a single cohesive group, researchers using the grounded theory tradition might research specific individuals who have all experienced an action, interaction, or process. In this study, all individuals had or will have experienced teaching, being mentored, and immigrating to the United States.

Even though I am the researcher and serve as a district mentor, none of the participants for this study are currently being mentored by me so as to avoid any potential for the participants to feel intimidated. Instead, beginning teachers serviced by other mentors were selected. The mentors, who assisted me with the recruitment of the BITs selected for this study, were mentors who were currently working with or had previously worked with immigrant, Asian or Latino, math or science, secondary teachers. Therefore, these colleagues, and ultimately the director, assisted me with accessing potential participants for the study. I conducted my interviews in locations outside of school that were convenient for the participant, and after school hours. I found that interviewing teachers outside of their work environment provided a more relaxed, less distracting setting.

Research Sample and Data Sources

Data Sources

For my study, I interviewed 12 Latino and Asian BITs who teach science or math at the secondary level for Yangna Unified at predominately lower socio-economic, urban schools. All 12 BITs have completed or are still participating in induction. All 12 teachers were first-generation immigrants. Using first-generation Latino or Asian teachers was important to my study because I wanted to see how cultured played a role in the mentoring relationship and whether any differences between the BIT and mentor had an effect. Since first-generation teachers were born abroad, there is generally a greater likelihood that their cultural values and norms would differ from the mainstream culture of native-born teachers. I also selected immigrants from Asia or Latin America who teach

either math or science in the secondary setting opposed to randomly selecting any BIT so as to reduce my moderator variables, which can destabilize the data.

Sampling Strategies

I selected Yangna Unified School District because of its considerable size, which guarantees the hiring of many new teachers every year. This district also encourages all of its new teachers to go through its district-run induction process. My study is an example of a purposeful, criterion-based, theoretical, and network sampling. It is purposeful because I intentionally, not randomly, selected individuals in order to learn about or better understand a central phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Creswell, 2012). According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), criterion-based sampling works well when all the participants have experienced the same phenomenon. This process is as well theoretical because the rich data that these purposefully selected participants provided me during the interviews added to my evolving conceptual framework (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). As stated by Glesne (2011), conducting research at one's own institution is attractive because rapport is already established with many of the key stakeholders and the amount of time needed for various steps has been reduced. This made this study an example of network sampling because, as an employee of Yangna Unified, I had access to its employees and locations. As stated above, I asked my colleagues, who are also mentors, for a list of their beginning teachers that fell under the specified criteria. I sent a personal invitation, via their mentor, to each potential participant on these lists. In addition, since I interviewed beginning teachers that are being serviced by mentors in the same program in which I work, this is an example of a backyard sampling strategy also, which according to Glesne (2011) is when the researcher does their study in their own

institution. This also allowed me to further survey my colleagues and find out who is mentoring a first-generation BIT that fell under the specified criteria.

Participant Profile

The characteristics of the 12 BITs interviewed can be found on Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Study Participants

Study Participant (pseudonym)	Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Subject Taught: Math or Science	Years Teaching	Age Immigrated to US	Background: Rural or Urban
1. Miki	A	F	35	M	2	30	U
2. Maria	L	F	26	M	2	6	R
3. Jose	L	M	37	M	5	13	U
4. Marissa	A	F	43	S	1.5	34	U
5. Yolanda	L	F	26	M	1	5	R
6. Joaquin	L	M	32	M	1.5	11	U
7. Ling	A	F	29	S	4	22	U
8. Hector	L	M	32	M	4	11	R
9. Pami	A	F	30	M	4	8	R
10. Kaito	A	M	47	M	3.5	11	U
11. Selena	L	F	34	S	3	6	R
12. Carla	L	F	30	S	2	5	R

L=Latin American A=Asian F=Female M=Male

Ethical Issues

All interviews were confidential and nothing was shared with the BIT's assigned mentor. All participants were assigned a pseudonym. The confidentiality protocol was declared and made clear during the recruitment process in the letter that was sent out to all potential candidates. Creswell (2012) states that in order to be ethical, assurances of confidentiality should be included in the invitation cover letter. Upon meeting the participant in person, I restated that I would not identify any individuals or locations specifically in my report to insure that this safeguard was clearly understood. I also emphasized that participation was not linked to the mentor induction program that BIT was participating in, so as to ally any fears or disable any sense of obligation. In addition, all participants were told that they had the right to refuse participation and/or discontinue the interview at any point. Finally, I involved my dissertation chair every step of the way to insure that any biases on my part did not intrude on the efficacy of the study.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Instruments

The instrument that I used to collect my data was the interview protocol. As defined by Creswell (2012), "…interviews occur when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers" (p.622). My face-to-face interview consisted of 10 open-ended questions followed by further probing questions. Probing questions allowed me to clarify, elaborate, explore and ask for examples, which provided me with more depth. I audiotaped the questions and responses because according to Creswell (2012), this method provides a more accurate documentation of the interview.

I generated the 10 initial and open-ended questions and the additional probing questions using traditional qualitative methods and used a semi-structured protocol for the interview. I refrained from using ambiguous or complex wording, asking yes/no questions, as well as any leading and too complex questions. Additionally, I avoided asking sensitive questions too soon into the interview. After an initial greeting, my first questions addressed the general background of the BIT and his or her present teaching situation so as to establish a context and establish a comfortable arena. In order to get a general perspective of the relationship between the beginning teacher and their mentor, I began the interview with some "grand tour" questions (Glesne, 2011; Rossman & Rallis, 2003) that provided me with a general sequence of events or activities. Grand tour questions are broad questions that are followed by more specific ones. These questions pertained more to the sequence of events beginning with their country of origin leading to their employment as a beginning teacher. Grand tour questions, according to Rossman and Rallis (2003), are good places to begin an interview because they ask the participant for experiential details that he or she can answer quickly and effortlessly.

Procedures

Interviewing individuals connected to my research purpose was essential because it helped me understand the beginning teacher's perspectives, deepened my understanding, generated rich and descriptive data, and helped me to gather insights into the participants' thinking (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). As a researcher, I tried to understand how culture played a role in the mentor-beginning teacher relationship. By interviewing BITs, I was able to see, what their experiences were in relationship to the mentoring process. Interviewing was the only way that I could gather insights into how the BIT was

thinking; no other instrument could have provided me with this. Examples of qualitative interview questions included, “In what ways do you think your relationship with your mentor is influenced by your cultural background?” and “How can mentors raise teachers’ self-esteem?”

I created a clear and concise invitation introducing my study and myself. Included in the letter was a brief explanation of the purpose of the study and how data would not be shared but that the findings would be amalgamated to influence future mentor training. I also mentioned in the invitation that a nominal compensation, in the form of a gift card, would be given for participation in the hopes of attracting a greater pool of participants. I designated the amount to $35, which is an approximation of a beginning teacher’s hourly wage. Recruitment involved having a mentor colleague personally deliver the invitation to the BIT that s/he mentors and inviting him or her on my behalf. Once 12 participants accepted the invitation, a schedule for the interviews was created in my personal, secure, cloud-based storage folder that is password protected and only I have access to. Data will be stored in this cloud-based storage for 10 years and then deleted. All times and locations were determined by the participant so as to facilitate the process.

I began to gather data in the fall of 2014. I interviewed 12 BITs in locations away from classrooms, which I believed were more productive since there tended to be fewer distractions. I realized that as a veteran mentor who is working as someone who assists teachers through the induction process, novice teachers may feel intimidated that their responses are not right or of a high enough caliber. Therefore, I used neutral language, did not react either positively or negatively to responses, and modified questions accordingly as I collected data so as to minimize this effect. My genuine interest in the

interview was apparent and I listened attentively to their responses (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). I also emphasized that my role was that of a researcher and not that of a mentor. In addition, before I began my first interview, I practiced with an informant and asked for feedback to ensure that I had stated my questions without using value-laden terms or implications. To further minimize participant reactivity, I always used anonymous names and locations when making references in my research.

At the conclusion of the interview, I asked my participant if s/he had any questions, thanked them for their time and compensated them with the gift card. I also asked if I might contact them again within 14 days via email if I needed further clarification on any points and/or whether or not s/he or she would consider reading the transcription upon its completion in order to see if it is accurate, realistic and complete (Carlson, 2010; Creswell, 2012).

Data Analysis

Preliminary Analysis

Before I began to gather my data, I first considered preliminary codes and themes based on concepts that appeared in my theoretical framework and in the literature. Key terms and concepts such as cultural adaptations, the role of the teacher, the role of the mentor, nuances of culture, and descriptors of individualism and collectivism were revisited. When data were collected and analyzed, these key terms and concepts were easier to identify and code. As I analyzed my data, new themes also emerged from important quotes and influenced my interview questions and probes that were constantly evolving as is appropriate in the grounded theory tradition. I kept memos in a reflective log to record my thoughts during the interview so that the data were richer with details.

The interviews were recorded using an audio device located on my computer and cell phone.

Thematic Data Analysis

I taped all interviews and then had them transcribed by a professional transcriber as soon as possible. Any information that would personally identify a participant was redacted from the interview transcripts. After I had the 12 interviews transcribed, I began assigning codes to the interview data using my framework as a guide. My dissertation chair and I generated many of these codes. Glesne (2011) defines thematic data analysis as a process, which consists of using analytic techniques, to review collected data for themes and patterns that emerge. Data that was coded similarly was further analyzed for their core commonalities, relationships and change across time (Glesne, 2011). Additional themes emerged and were added to the existing list of codes. I used the qualitative data analysis computer program, Dedoose.com, to assist me with the coding of data as well as building connections and establishing themes.

Interpretations of Results

I was cognizant of using as many of my senses as possible so that I maximized the interpretation of my results. "Data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can figure out what you have learned and make sense of what you have experienced" (Glesne, 2011, p. 184). As a researcher, what this meant was that I had to carefully jot down field notes during the interview because they could shed some light and be used during my analysis in some capacity. All of these notes were labeled according to whether they were a memo, an observer's note, etc. (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Holloway and Jefferson (2005) created questions that I kept in mind when I

analyzed my data. These questions focused on being aware on what and why you notice certain things. They also focus on the interpretation of what you notice and how you know that your interpretation is the correct one. These questions prevented me from making any biased conclusions or assumptions. My dissertation chair and committee members were given drafts of my interpretations to ensure that no theme was overlooked or personal bias involved. These drafts were also shared with some of the participants to ensure accuracy and so that additional details could be added, if warranted.

Roles of the Researcher

Since I have been employed as a mentor for SNT for over four years, a fact that several of the BITs interviewed were aware of, I assured the participants early in the interview that my current role was that of a researcher and not that of a mentor. I was also aware that I may hear, as termed by Glesne (2011), dangerous knowledge, which is information that may pose ethical concerns involving the beginning teacher's mentor and/or other teachers on staff. If what I heard related to my study, I learned ways to incorporate this knowledge into my study but ensuring that the anonymity of the individuals involved was protected.

Researcher Bias

As a Latino mentor teacher who is a doctoral student conducting a study on the effects of culture on the mentoring process, I necessarily brought certain biases to the study which I can best describe as follows:

I believed that beginning teacher/mentor relationships could be affected by culture during the mentoring process. In my own experience as a mentor, my effectiveness to assist my beginning teachers was enhanced due to my background on cultural

competency. But I do not always see this cultural understanding by my peers or in the training that is provided to mentors. This has given me the motivation to research this phenomenon more deeply so that I can better understand how to bridge cultural competency and mentoring with the hope that this can be embedded in future mentor trainings.

Latino cultures tend to be more collectivistic than Euro-American cultures, which tend to be more individualist. Having been raised in a Latino, and collectivistic environment, I attempted to remain neutral and not assign a value system to either one of these contrasting value systems. All these individuals have teaching credentials and thus should have covered the basics such as lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment. If my participant showed gaps in any of these areas, I did not react negatively and/or let this influence how I viewed the interview.

I have also worked in the past as a teacher researcher who sought to find ways to better bridge school and home culture especially as it pertained to Latino, immigrant culture. As stated by Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), as someone who will be using grounded theory as my tradition, I needed to, "set aside or suspend theoretical ideas so that the analytic substantive theory can emerge" (p. 33). I was cognizant that my past research may taint my current research unless I established checks and balances, which included having my dissertation chair and committee member, who are familiar with my previous work, read my findings and analysis. These multiple readings by others also safeguarded that my biases did not emerge or influence the analysis of the significant themes that surfaced. I realized that all studies have some bias but with careful planning and reflection, as well as working closely with my professors, colleagues, dissertation

chair and committee members, many of these biases were minimized.

Chapter 4: Findings and Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the role of culture on the mentoring-beginning teacher relationship. Although a considerable amount of research exists highlighting ways to build effective relationships in the mentoring process, few empirical studies have examined how culture affects the dynamics of the relationship between a mentor and a beginning immigrant teacher (BIT). Much of teacher success lies with understanding school culture and being able to effectively navigate the school arena. This can be challenging even for native-born beginning teachers, but for individuals whose ethnic values and traditions differ from those of the mainstream culture, the process can be even more daunting.

A few programs exist to help ease this cultural transition faced by many BITs, including the training of mentors who will be supporting BITs (Fee, 2010). Most mentor programs emphasize supporting the novice teacher with resources, strategies and providing feedback after observations. However this feedback is generally based on what the mentor sees. It does not normally address why the beginning teacher may be implementing specific pedagogical practices and interacting with the school arena in a certain manner, which may be based on their own cultural perceptions and values. As Hutchinson and Jazzar (2007) have stated in their research, the mentor/BIT relationship should be viewed with a different lens from those relationships with native-born beginning teachers, and therefore, such relationships need different supports. Yet according to Bartlett (2014), these BITs receive the same mentor support that other beginning teachers get. Mentoring programs should not use a one-size-fits-all approach

when working with beginning teachers but embody specific strategies that deal with issues beginning teachers from different cultures may face.

The theoretical framework that guided my study is rooted in understanding cultural values and is based on the principles of individualism and collectivism as articulated by Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield and Quiroz (2001). Generally, individualism emphasizes individual success, and collectivism emphasizes the success of the group (Greenfield, Trumbull, et al., 2006). Other collectivistic values that may contrast with individualistic values include formality and respect for authority, working collaboratively versus in isolation, using criticism for normative behavior, and viewing the parent's role as one to ensure that the child is socially adjusted (Raeff, Greenfield & Quiroz, 2000). Arguably, no one is solely individualistic or collectivistic, and people move along the continuum as time progresses and influencers emerge. As researchers have noted, the degree of one's collectivism or individualism on the continuum is influenced by higher levels of socioeconomic status, greater formal education and whether the individual was raised in a rural versus urban environment. (Greenfield, Trumbull, et al., 2006). The amount of time that an individual resides in either an individualistic or collectivistic society can also influence a person's placement on the continuum. It is important to note that this study is not meant to generalize about anyone's cultural position based on where s/he was born.

Table 4.0 gives an example of the two extremes of individualism and collectivism. Included are some of their influencers and countries that fall under these characteristics according to a study conducted by Hofstede (2001).

Table 4.1 **The Culture Continuum**

Individualistic	**Collectivistic**
• Working in isolation • Equality • Praise • Tolerance for ambiguity Factors that Contribute • Urban background • Higher education • Higher socio-economic status Individualistic Countries The United States, Canada, The United Kingdom, Australia, Denmark	• Working collaboratively • Hierarchy • Using criticism for normative behavior • Scripted curriculum Factors that Contribute • Rural background • Lower socio-economic background Collectivistic Countries Mexico, China, Philippines, Vietnam, Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador

According to Hofstede (2001), the dominant culture of the United States is highly individualistic (Hofstede, 2001). However, 70% of the world's cultures can be described as collectivistic (Triandis, 1989). Many BITs working at schools in the United States are from countries in Latin America and Asia (Bartlett, 2014). These countries are considered collectivistic according to Hofstede's research. In addition, many of the BITs interviewed for this study were from rural locations and from a lower to middle socio-economic status. These teachers often come with a cultural value system that is markedly different from that of their colleagues and their mentors who predominantly come from urban and middle class backgrounds. These conditions and cultural inheritors often force the BIT to learn how to crisscross between cultures in order to avoid misunderstandings, which can

affect their relationships with their students, peers, administrators, and mentors. BITs may move along the continuum when they leave their collectivistic countries of origin because they are now achieving middle class status and living in a cosmopolitan city as well as being immersed in the highly collectivistic culture of the United States. But this gradual move along the continuum takes time, and a BIT's initial encounters at an individualistic school may cause confusion and difficulty due to the collectivistic norms that they enter with. Usually one's own culture-based values and behaviors remain largely invisible—without explicit attention drawn to them and opportunities to name and explore them. Not understanding cultural differences may cause discomfort for the BIT when they conflict with other cultural expectations (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield and Quiroz, 2001).

This study examines the interplay and dynamics of these cultural differences by collecting data from a series of 12 interviews with BITs from Asia and Latin America who all taught either science or math at the secondary level for Yangna Unified School District, which is a large urban school district located in the southwestern portion of the United States. This study was guided by the following research question: What role does culture play in the mentor/beginning immigrant teacher relationship?

In this chapter, the results of the BIT interviews are presented. The data were derived from 12 individual interviews that were recorded and transcribed by a transcription service. Pseudonyms were given to all participants and any schools mentioned in order to protect their identity and ensure confidentiality. The data were then categorized by themes using the conceptual framework of collectivism and individualism.

From the interviews, three major themes emerged, which included the central role of culture, navigating the educational arena, and nuances of cultural influences.

Central Role of Culture

Culture is defined by Lindsey (2009) as "the set of practices and beliefs that is shared with members of a particular group that distinguishes one group from others" (p.11). Through the interviews, it became apparent that many of BITs had similar experiences and responses as they encountered practices and beliefs that were alien to them and/or unlike their own. Several BITs discussed how having other educators, who understood their culture, assisted them with overcoming some of these cultural barriers. Using Lindsey's definition of culture, the data collected could be grouped into two sub-themes: cultural barriers, and cultural connectedness.

Cultural Adaptations

As stated by Darling Hammond (2009), beginning teachers are often placed in classrooms that serve the most needy and disadvantaged students. Many of these students come from vastly different cultural backgrounds, which may or may not conflict with the cultural background of the BIT. Not only do these BITs have to learn how to refine their pedagogical practices—like all beginning teachers do—but they must learn how to navigate the culture of the United States as well. These are a few examples of cultural differences that BITs face when they begin teaching in the United States. Ling, a BIT from China who immigrated when she was 22 years old recalls how difficult it was for her, both mentally and physically, to adapt to her new school environment as a new science teacher. Education is perceived quite differently in China where students are

often placed in classrooms based on academic ability and not solely on available space. She stated:

> …I was facing kids who nobody else wanted because now all of a sudden we have a Mandarin teacher and we can dump kids into her class. That did happen to me. I was not prepared for it…back home, coming from a very knitted communal-based society, education is valued very, very high.

Likewise, Miki, who emigrated from China at the age of 30, shared her feelings of isolation and lack of collaboration inside and outside of school, compared to what she was accustomed to as a teacher in China. As articulated in the research done by Hofstede (2001), it is fair to say that schools in the United States tend to exhibit more individualistic qualities than schools in Asia and Latin America. A characteristic of individualism is working in isolation. Many teachers in the United States work in isolation unless the school has something in place, such as a Professional Learning Community or other built-in collaborative professional periods that allot specific times for educators to meet and share expertise. A study conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) found that teacher collaboration for instructional planning is essential in order to positively impact student learning (Herman, Dawson, Dee, Greene, Maynard, Redding & Darwin, 2008). For schools that do not have built-in mechanisms for collaboration, a teacher can end up feeling isolated. Here Miki shared:

> In China, we work closely to each other. Not only during the teaching times. And we're also very close as friends after school. But here, you know, this is more working isolated…you don't feel like you belong to the community. It's just a job.

Miki also spoke of the differences between the perceived responsibility for student achievement between her homeland and the United States, and how these differences manifest themselves as potential conflicts with her administrator. She stated:

> My culture is like, the students' failure, mostly, all on themselves because they are not maturing up. They didn't take the initiative to follow the responsibilities to achieve their goal. But for her, it's more like if your students are not successful which means you're not a good teacher, which shifts the responsibility to the teacher more.

Here Miki gave an example how in her country the students and parents are responsible for student success. This is in direct contrast to the expectations in the United States where the teacher is perceived to be responsible for ensuring that all students are successful (Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008). Miki is aware that the national trend in the United States is leaning towards basing a percentage of teacher evaluations on student achievement, which caused her further stress.

The BITs who were participants in this study, encountered a host of other culturally inflected issues. For example, in a study conducted by Fee (2010), immigrant teachers did not anticipate encountering a lack of national curriculum, independent classroom centers, the absence of touching, differing parental expectations, the need to differentiate instruction, and having to deal with a plethora of standardized tests.

Pami, a 30 year-old Math teacher from rural Vietnam talked about her impressions on the role of respect and how she encountered significant differences between her experiences in Vietnam and those at her new American high school.

> When I was born in Vietnam…you always pay respect to your teacher, whether you like the person or not. Whether they scream at you or yell at you, you always pay respect because they teach you. But when I teach at Main Street High School, it's a total different story. They don't give me that.

Main Street High School, where Pami teaches, is a low achieving school located in a densely populated, lower-socioeconomic community. Schools such as these often face the most challenging behaviors due to absentee parents, crime, low academic rigor, and few community resources. Furthermore, this is where most beginning teachers are placed without adequate preparation for what they will encounter. Classroom management is a major concern for these teachers and is noted upon as one of the main reasons for beginning teacher stress and departure from the profession. These conditions are in direct contrast with higher socio-economic schools, which many times have adequate support in addition to offering more gifted and advanced placement classes (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Joaquin, a 32-year-old math teacher from Costa Rica mentions that the cultural differences he needed to adapt to pertained to the lack of academic rigor. The academic rigor of the textbooks he used in Costa Rica was higher. As someone who taught secondary math in his country of origin, he shares the differences he encountered:

> I was looking at the questions and the way the Costa Rican books write the questions…if I was to give this to the kids in the U.S. just the way it's written, they'll be so scared because they don't see things like that; it is so much more simple. Over there, the rigor is more than what it is here.

Teachers in the United States are continually reminded by administrators to ensure that the content is academically rigorous. Joaquin was accustomed to that rigor as a math teacher in Costa Rica but finds it difficult to apply here in the United States when so many of his students do not have the mathematical basics to succeed.

Cultural Connectedness

In the school district where this study took place, all beginning teachers who need to clear their preliminary credential must enroll in an induction program for two years. The induction program assigns each beginning teacher a mentor teacher whose caseload includes approximately 20 teachers. Due to the vast size of this district, beginning teachers are matched up with mentors generally based on where the school is located geographically. The cultures of the beginning teacher and the mentor teacher are not taken into account.

Despite this, almost all of the BITs mentioned during the interviews that they felt that having similar or dissimilar cultural connections with mentors and other educators had an impact when forming relationships and understanding their new cultural setting. Yolanda, a first year math teacher from rural Mexico explains how having a mentor, who is also Latino, helps facilitate the mentoring process by building a certain level of comfort:

> It just makes us more closer because I think that being Latino or being Hispanic whatever you label yourself as, and having that cultural background, as soon as you speak a different word in that native language, then you just connect on a different level. With her, I could just throw out some Spanish words and then we just keep on going from there. It just feels really comfortable.

In this instance, having a mentor and beginning teacher from similar backgrounds helped to set up a strong foundation for their relationship. These foundations must exist before formal mentoring can commence because they involve trust, respect and understanding (Brooks, 2000). Most mentor programs do not necessarily take into consideration, due to logistical reasons, aligning the culture of the BIT with that of the mentor.

Similarly, Carla, a second year science teacher from rural Mexico, mentions how she and her mentor view the value of education through the same lens and are very close because of the fact that they are both immigrants. Her mentor is from another highly collectivistic country, India.

> I feel that even though we come from completely different parts of the world, we value education and we know that that's the only way to get out of that under-served label (poverty). I say, not under-served because of your ethnicity, but because of the community you live in. Like I said, we also value education…I think that probably our relationship wouldn't have been as intimate. Probably, I wouldn't have had that conversation with her, "Oh yes, I came here when I was five, I jumped the border" and all of that.

Selena, who teaches math in an urban high school and emigrated from rural El Salvador, mentions the importance of culture when forming relationships with colleagues and what criteria she identifies as important. As in the previous examples above, both share cultural traits that are alike. Therefore the relationship is spontaneous and inherently comfortable. She goes on to say:

> With this other teacher…we were both born in El Salvador. We're both around the same age. We both were immigrant students here. We went both to UCLA.

> We just have so many commonalities…With the other teachers, honestly, there's really not much more in common besides maybe some went to UCLA. I think that was pretty much it and we're all teachers.

Selena not only has formed a bond partly based on culture with her mentor, but she feels isolated from the other teachers as well. This feeling of isolation is detrimental for teachers—especially beginning teachers—as found by Nielson, Barry and Addison (2007). Their study found that effective collaboration among school staff is linked to improving teachers' attitudes and practices. Goddard, Goddard, and Tschannen-Moran (2007) also found in their study that there is a positive relationship between teacher collaboration and consequent differences among schools in mathematics and reading achievement. Results from their study indicated that students who attend schools characterized by higher levels of teacher collaboration had higher achievement.

Cultural connections not only apply to colleagues as we see in Ling's example. She recalls here how her principal, who is also Chinese, proved to be her cultural liaison and good support.

> She was an immigrant herself. She later became principal, so she has been here now I think more than 50 years, but then she understood where I'm coming from. She understood my struggle. She understood as a young immigrant what difficulty I am facing with this urban school kids. That year was critical.

Due to these cultural bonds, the relationship between the two was strong from the onset and Ling felt supported throughout her first year. This may not have been the case if her principal had been from a different culture.

Navigating Different Roles in the Educational Arena

As found by Hutchinson and Jazzar (2011), BITs need support with adjustments, both cultural and social, as well as pedagogical, to navigate the school arena. Like individuals, institutions, such as schools, have cultural identities. According to the National School Climate Center (2014), positive school climates share certain common characteristics and are conducive to job satisfaction, morale, and effectiveness. These characteristics include: relationships and interactions that are defined by openness, trust, respect, and appreciation; staff relationships are collegial, collaborative, and productive; staff members feel emotionally and physically safe; mistakes are not treated or seen as failures but as opportunities to learn and grow for both students and educators; and important leadership decisions are made collaboratively with input from staff members, students and parents.

These institutional cultures of written and unwritten rules are important because beginning immigrant teachers may have different cultural backgrounds and must navigate both the cultural identities of the people around them and the cultural identity of school sites and districts (Bartlett, 2014). Understanding school culture and being able to navigate the school arena is crucial for teacher success. All (100%) BITs mentioned their perceptions of the various roles in the school arena. These included the roles of the teacher, mentor, administrator, and parents.

Role of the Teacher

Teachers are key players in the educational arena, and therefore the nature of their roles emerged throughout the data. The following are the themes that emerged.

The Teacher as a Second Parent

One-fourth of the BITs interviewed mentioned that teachers are regarded as "second parents" in their country of origin. Collectivistic cultures believe that the parent's responsibility is the moral upbringing of their children (Valdes, 1996). Parents in collectivist cultures feel that bringing up well behaved children is ultimately reflected in the culture of the classroom, for a classroom free of behavioral problems is a way of supporting the teacher and their children's education and fulfilling their parental obligations. That is why parents from collectivistic cultures, more often than not, begin parent conferences by asking about their child's behavior in the classroom; they want assurance that they are fulfilling their parental responsibility to raise well-behaved children (Trumbull, Greenfield, Rothstein-Fisch, & Quiroz, 2007). These parents view the teacher's responsibility as formally educating their child; education in collectivistic countries means not only formal education in the form of instruction, but fostering good behavior, which is viewed as integral to the process. Collectivist parents would seem to believe that you cannot have one without the other—that is why, many times the teacher will be referred to as the 'second parent."

Joaquin understands this paradigm and discusses how he sees the role of parents based on his experiences as a student and teacher in Costa Rica. Here he talks about how parents want assurance that their child is respectful. He says:

> As a parent, you have to expect that you have to be polite, you have to be humble, all these other things. I think that's the reason why parents will ask, "How do they behave?" They want to know, "Am I doing good with my kid? Are they going to school? Are they dealing with other adult authorities?" They're just going with it

or they're just following it and they're asking you whether they've done your job as a parent or that the child is behaving and they're respectful.

Here he recalls his days as a teacher in Costa Rica.

There's not so much of the disrespect that you can get here from students. In Costa Rica, I know that for sure, there's more respect with teachers. Like I said, it's like a parent figure, a second parent. That's the view of teachers.

Fortunately for Joaquin, he was knowledgeable about this cultural norm and the importance of acknowledging and validating the parent's role and did not need his mentor's support, but this may not always be the case. Selena takes this understanding of a parent's role a step further,

When you tell for example an immigrant parent, "Your child is failing," the parent first wants to hit them and then tells you, "Teacher, what can you do to help," instead of saying, "My child is failing then I need to make sure he's doing the homework," or, "I need to make sure that he comes to school every day." That's not their mentality necessarily and so it does make a difference because sometimes as teachers, we'll tell the parents that your child is failing and we expect them to know what to do. As an immigrant, I know I need to tell them, "If you're not home, you need to do this. If you are home then you need to do this." I give more specifics because I understand the immigrant parent better.

Hector, who now teaches math, understands this role the teacher plays as a perceived second parent as he reflects on his days in his native Guatemala.

My grandma saw my teachers as my second parent, per se, because I was spending time with them and they would be educating me, not only academically,

but sometimes, they would teach me manners and principles. So, in that sense, they look up, we actually look up at teachers back in my country…Here…they don't see that, once they're here they don't see it as they would see it over there...

This perception of a teacher as a second parent is important for the classroom teacher because it ties in with how the student will view the teacher. In collectivistic countries, there tends to be more respect and better classroom comportment because the teacher is an extension of the parent. A BIT may expect this to be the same in the United States but many times encounters the opposite. The parent, on the other hand, may feel that enforcing social norms is not solely the responsibility of the parent but the teacher's as well. This cultural confusion can negatively affect how the classroom is run and perceived by others, including administration, in the school arena (Trumbull et al., 2001).

Teacher and Student Responsibility

Many BITs mentioned how in their country of origin the responsibility for academic success lies with the student, which is the norm in collectivistic countries. Teachers disseminate academic content, but ultimately it is up to the student to learn it. If the student fails, the blame is on the student not the teacher. This is the opposite in schools in the United States where the responsibility for student success is generally placed on the teacher. Hector, a 32-year-old math teacher from rural Guatemala, gave us an example of this dichotomy when he spoke about how in Guatemala, the responsibility is on the student whenever he or she is having problems: "My mom, my kids, grandma didn't have to get involved because there was no reason for it. I was responsible for it." Hector explained how life is easier for the teacher in Guatemala and that familiarity is

what he fell back on as a new teacher in the United States but now knows it is not effective in disseminating content for maximum retention and engagement.

> That's what I did when I started. I would do direct teaching (lecture), which is the way I learned back in my country…Direct teaching means that you step in front of the board, you explain on the board, the students listen then you give them the work and they work…Well, that's how it is over there. I would say 90 % of the schools, that's how it is. If you have students who listen, they know it's their responsibility to do the work, pay attention; that's the easiest thing for teachers to do…I don't do it here because it doesn't work here…Because the students are different. They have different backgrounds… We have to do whatever works for the students, not whatever works for me.

This is an interesting example of a teacher accelerating his teaching practice. Hector is cognizant that the responsibility of learning is placed on the student in his native Guatemala even if it was presented many times in a low-retention format, via a lecture. But now that he is a teacher in the United States, he realizes that this style of learning is ineffective because his population of students is different and this population does not respond positively to a sole lecture format. He is also aware that academic achievement is not solely the responsibility of any one party but of many. He has moved along the continuum of individualism and collectivism towards a more centrist approach where responsibility is shared. Here Hector supports his current views on responsibility for learning:

> I would say, divided equally among three people: teachers, student and the parents. Obviously, the teacher has to communicate with the parents to let them

> know because they're not there. But the student has to make an effort to learn. So, if they know they're failing, they have to make an extra effort, not only to learn, but to bring their grades up. The teacher has to find a way to help them bring the grade up too, change the teaching, change practices…Differentiation and that's basically the thing that actually works.

Knowing and Bonding with Students

It became apparent after conducting the interviews that several of the BITs felt that the role of the teacher involved knowing their students beyond the academic setting. Building relationships that go beyond the academic setting is common in collectivist cultures. Selena shared her initial feelings about bonding with her math students who were mostly Latino well after graduation, as well as the confusion she encountered when she was told not to do so.

> I wasn't sure why but my principal told me that I should not keep contact with my graduated students. It was just confusing to me because you built this relationship for two, three, four years and then you're just told to let them go and not talk to them again and they should not visit me in the classroom unless it's allowed by the principal. It was just so different for me…They'll come in and they'll just talk to me about what's going on, update me in their lives and that's what they would always do the whole time they were a student in my school.

Like Selena, Hector also emphasizes the importance of teachers knowing who their students are. He perceives that bond as the most important teacher practice, and even believes it should be initiated early into the school year in order to form essential and meaningful student-teacher relationships. Here he emphasizes that knowing that a student

is Latino is not enough; as he points out, Latino students have diversities within that larger grouping.

> Even within L.A., I see my students are different from the ones from I used to work at Hudson Park. They're Hispanic and they act differently because over there is second, third, fourth-generation. Some of their grandparents already speak English. Most of my kids that I have right here, some of the parents speak English, but some of them don't. Some of them are raised by the grandmother and those grandparents don't speak English, so their views of education is different, they are different…There you have second-generation, you have immigrants, you have first-generation…I don't know if I should generalize, but some of them lived in the city. In the city you have more access to education than if you lived in a rural area per se.

As a Latino himself, Hector knows that diversity exits among his Latino population and sees this population differently and differentiates in order to build strong relationships accordingly. Quiroz and Greenfield (1998) found a strong correlation between teachers' knowing their students and student achievement. But unlike Selena's case, where her principal discouraged her from maintaining contact with her past students, Hector's mentor encourages and supports him in getting to know his students beyond a superficial level, which may mean maintaining ties well after graduation. Hector's mentor had him document two case study students and really delve into what he knew about them personally, meta-cognitively and emotionally.

Teachers and Respect

The theme of respect and teachers came up in all of the interviews. As stated earlier, parents in collectivistic countries expect teachers to be as respected as parents are at home. Ling, who taught in China and immigrated here at the age of 22, agrees that teachers are looked upon with great respect when she says,

> …if I say I'm a teacher in China, people go, "Oh, wow, you're a teacher!" The mentality is different. In China, being a teacher is you would be very well respected because we call teachers engineers for soul, engineers for minds. You're well paid, and your social status is very high. The parents love you. They think you're almost God, God-like because you're taking care of their children, spend most of the time other than their own parents.

All BITs stated that respect for the teacher was far greater in their native countries than it was here in the United States, as Jose states:

> The process from the time the teacher walks into the classroom, the student shows respect. It's almost a little bit militant in the sense that students need to stand up and say good morning to the teacher. I think it's just the way we are conditioned as students from the beginning, from the very beginning in first grade, that certain behaviors, certain actions, certain drills that we will need to conduct were almost militant…that decision itself of being a teacher, it was a position of respect.

When many BITs begin teaching in the United States, they encounter shock in terms of student comportment. They were not accustomed to students talking and not obeying the classroom rules; this is all perceived as being disrespectful to the classroom teacher. As mentioned earlier, Ling talked with her mentor how she felt mistreated.

> …I was facing kids who nobody else wanted because now all of a sudden we have a Mandarin teacher and we can dump kids into her class...I was complaining to her how I was mistreated and how they saw me as a dumping ground rather than value what I can bring to the school and the kids' education and benefit.

Fortunately, her school assigned mentor understood the different value systems as they pertain to education between China and the United States.

She explained to me here,

> …public education, we take everybody and you have to take them in no matter what's their income level, no matter what's their intellectual background is, and if they're in your classroom, it's a responsibility. If you don't love them, then nobody's going to love them. Yeah, I didn't understand how much struggle back home, coming from Chinese culture, coming from a very knitted communal-based society. Education is valued very, very high…I guess here, the cultural difference is education isn't viewed as a shortcut to success or to a shortcut of change of social status. Not necessarily students come in with a background or a cultural understanding of through education their life could change. They didn't very much emphasize how public education would bring to them. I guess she clarified that for me and helped through that process and having me understand it's really a cultural difference. It's not that kids were not respecting me enough, but the mentality is very different.

Role of the Mentor

The role of the mentor came up in all twelve of the participant interviews. The responses of the BITs in this area often addressed more than one theme. Ingersoll and

Smith (2004), regard the main objective of mentoring programs as providing what might be called 'local guidance' to beginning teachers as a way to help them navigate the new school arena, which can include differences brought on by cultural norms. The sub-themes that emerged in regard to mentors serving as local-guides were as follows: mentors as cross-cultural clarifiers, mentors and acceptance, and mentors providing emotional support and resources.

Mentors as Cross-cultural Clarifiers

Navigating the new environment may include clarifying cultural confusions for the BIT. As Adler (1975) and Pederson (1995) found in their research, understanding cultural differences is a natural step that will lead to the bicultural stage where the person can navigate both cultures with some comfort. In the interim—before the relative comfort of the bicultural stage takes hold—many BITs need a local guide to help them understand the specific cultural nuances that they may initially experience as barriers.

Pami, a 30-year-old math teacher from Vietnam, describes how her US-born mentor helped her to navigate American culture by assisting her to understand the emphasis on self-expression and choice, as part of the cultural norm in the United States. This is the direct opposite of her collectivistic home culture where parents feel that they know what is best for their children and that parental views should be respected.

> To me, like when he born here, he see like oh in America ... He told me about American culture, the parents always say, "Try your best. Be whatever you want to be."…In the Asian, no. You better be a doctor…you better be a teacher…No way other out…the parents are older. They see life so much. You don't know

> what life is. “You see life more than me?” That’s what my dad told me…They set it for you since you’re young.

This quote also illustrates a characteristic that all five Asian BITs brought up, which was how education is viewed as something that is not negotiable. Not only is education not negotiable, but also that the chosen field of study is determined by the parent, and must be professional and practical. These professions are selected by authority figures such as parents and other family members. Authority figures in collectivistic cultures command respect because of their age and life experience. Such an approach is unlike the United States, where students are encouraged to select a field that interests them and the views of their elders are not necessarily held in high regard. Asian parents feel that practicality takes precedence over following one’s dream. Kaito, a third year math teacher from Japan reiterates these points.

> There is definitely a huge difference, I think. Again it's the value of education. Meaning as early as when I'm in elementary school. I don't think I thought of an option not going to college. It's not an option not going to college…We all knew that we need to go to college. We need to earn a degree and that's the only way to get a decent job. That's still the fact in Japan, it's you still need four year degree or education for anyone to have a steady career.

Teachers in the United States generally refrain from encouraging students to select fields that may not interest them. Selecting a field of study that one likes is typical in individualistic countries because the focus is on what the individual wants and does not necessarily take into considerations the desires of others.

Having a mentor who can clarify cultural differences proved beneficial for Ling, who was placed with a Cantonese-speaking mentor upon arriving at her school. This assistance was not just in terms of issues with language but with cultural misunderstandings as well.

> She would debrief and coach and she would go, "Wow, it's really a cultural difference you are describing here." She's almost like a doctor. She could analyze and diagnose all the scenarios I had.

One scenario Ling shared that caused her confusion before her mentor clarified it was the expectations that teachers should seek parent volunteers. In China, parents support the classroom teacher by sending their children prepared and obedient. Ling goes on to say:

> Back home, we don't ask parents to volunteer... I think it's cultural understanding because we expect you to support your teacher and your children in other way possible. There isn't any chaperone in China so we never involve the parents in field trips and you don't see any classroom volunteers.

But at Yangna Unified, all teachers are asked to, “Engage parents in the school’s volunteer program so they can participate in supporting school-wide, classroom, and parent involvement activities” (Parent Community Services Branch, 2015, p. 2). Fortunately for Ling, her mentor explained the cultural differences between China and the United States. This cultural explanation was important because if Ling had not followed through on this district-emphasized goal, her action could have been perceived by others, including administration and parents, as being standoffish, defiant, and/or not being a team player.

Her mentor also explained the differences between how education is viewed in China and how it is perceived in the United States and why students may behave the way they do. Education in China is perceived as the most important means of social advancement and a means of bringing the family out of a lower socio-economic status. The mentor also clarified how many of her students do not see the importance of an education and attend because they are forced to, which can give a teacher the perception that the negative and lackadaisical behavior is directed toward him/her. But in reality, it is just that students don't see the relevance or correlation between school and future success. Ling goes on to say:

> I guess here, the cultural difference is education is viewed as a single way or it isn't viewed as a shortcut to success or to a shortcut of change of social status. Not necessarily students come in with a background or a cultural understanding of through education their life could change. They didn't very much emphasize how public education would bring to them. I guess she clarified that for me and helped through that process and having me understand it's really a cultural difference. It's not that kids were not respecting me enough but the mentality is very different.

Hector had similar narratives, and he discussed how his mentor helped him reexamine his views when he was having difficulty with classroom management as compared to what he was accustomed to in Guatemala. Consequently, Hector's self-examination brought about a new understanding that involved students and respect, the role of parents, and the role and responsibilities of the teacher.

> Well, over there, it's taken for granted that you go to school and you're going to learn and you're going to pay attention. Here, not all the kids are like that. Most

> are like that, but some kids go to school because they have to. Their parents send them or the parents are going to get in trouble if they don't go. So those teachers, back in my country, they didn't really need that much support, because they have to just focus on teaching and grading papers and planning lessons, that's it. In the beginning I saw this job as doing that and babysitting in a way. So yes, it was different and it affected the way that, being from different cultural backgrounds does affect the way you teach because, like I said, he changed my view on a few things and he made me open-minded to a few things I probably wouldn't have thought about…

Joaquin illustrates the fact that cultural bridges can be built when the mentor and the BIT see things similarly due to similar cultural experiences. According to him, his mentor, who is also an immigrant, understands the role of respect and the role of family. He states:

> I think since we're both not raised here that there might be some similarities as to how you view parent involvements. I know for me, growing up, a teacher was like a parent. You respect your teacher. You don't answer back. That's how I view teachers…Also, the role of family and I think that their view of family and the role of parents is probably very close to my experience. When I compare maybe his background where I think parents, they believe that the teacher knows best. They're just going to go with what the teacher knows or what the teacher does. I'm pretty sure maybe that's the same philosophy from where it is from.

However, not all mentors have the same cross-cultural understanding as we see in this passage where Selena describes to her US-born mentor why her Latino students may not attend school.

> I have been trying to explain to my mentor how sometimes our students don't come to school when they're immigrants for other reasons besides they don't feel well and I think sometimes we don't understand why. They will let other things get in the way, but the difference in our culture I think doesn't always allow us to see the other possibilities of why things happen around us…Some of our students may not come to school because they have to work…they don't come to school because they're having a lot of issues at home.

Here, traditional roles are reversed, as the BIT takes the clarifying role and explains to her mentor why her Latino students may have many absences, which negatively affect their academic achievement. Cross-cultural misunderstandings are common in educational arenas when the culture of the educator and the students are different (Hutchinson & Jazzar, 2007). Studies show that dominant paradigms for responding to large gaps in student achievement need to be addressed if positive change is to take place (Friedrich & McKinney, 2010). In this case, it is the BIT who is attempting to create a new mindset with her mentor regarding student attrition. Selena understands that many of her students come from collectivistic cultures and the emphasis is on the family. When someone is sick and/or needs to be taken care of, it is up to others in the family to step in. This may be perceived as neglect, in regards to education, in more individualistic cultures.

Mentors and Acceptance

Additionally, not understanding other cultural norms can create a barrier in a mentor and beginning teacher's relationship because it can affect effective communication and build a feeling of distrust if either party feels that the other has a negative view of their culture or of the cultures of others. BITs, like all teachers, come in with different cultural backgrounds. Eight out of the twelve BITs interviewed for this study mentioned how their mentor did not feel that their BIT had to necessarily change their cultural norms but accepted them at where they were. In addition, the mentors did not make them feel as if they were inadequate teachers, even as they were assisting them to become more effective in their pedagogy. The theme of mutual respect within the mentor relationship was evident in over 75% of the interviews. As cited by Ingersoll and Smith's research (2004), respect is crucial in order to build and sustain an effective partnership between the mentor and the beginning teacher. In a study by Jewell (2007), teachers agreed that one of the most critical elements of support provided to them during to their success as first year teachers was their relationship with their mentor. Respect is crucial for building this effective relationship. Here Jose states how he feels that his mentor accepts him for who he is and does not try to change him.

> I also feel that she cares about me as a person, as a teacher, and I feel that she also understands what I'm going through. Maybe, as a mentor, in my head, I get the image that there is a seasoned teacher that is telling me what to do and how to do certain things in the classroom, but I think that image is just completely wrong. I think that the right way a mentor can ... Or a better way in which a mentor can help the mentee is by doing what my mentor is doing which is showing an

> understanding, an appreciation for the teacher because I think a lot of times we feel that we're not properly valued, even at this school by the administrators. I think that's the best way to establish that trust.

Acceptance and not being judgmental are crucial characteristics for building strong mentor/beginning teacher relationships. Selena illustrates this as well in this passage:

> The mentor knows that they're not just coming in to say this was good, this was bad but it's more like why this was done and just probing. That's what I really like about the mentor that he probes deeper. He doesn't make any kind of assumptions about anything. He's just open to what's going on here thing instead of just let me focus on trying to find a problem. The mentee, the teacher also opened to realize that maybe things would not always be in your favor.

Yolanda compares her old mentor teacher, who used to make her feel that she was constantly doing something wrong, with her new mentor:

> I feel really comfortable. If I think, "Oh, maybe I don't know how this might work out. Can we try something else?" Her versus my old mentor teacher, my residency teacher, I'm so comfortable with my new mentor teacher, because with her, even if there's something that I don't agree on, I won't feel afraid to tell her. I know that she won't shut me down. Instead of shutting me down, we would work together with that concern that I have and mold it into something new. Versus with my old mentor teacher, it's like, "No, that's wrong…

Maria feels that by having a mentor who validates you and doesn't make you feel like you have to change completely, respect and trust is established. Eight of the twelve BITs

felt that their mentor accepted them for who they were, which helped establish a strong and trusting relationship. Maria illustrates this here when she says:

> He lets me say what I think that I could do in certain situations and then he gives me idea, maybe you should do something like this that goes a long way to what you are doing already and he doesn't tell me what to do, like he goes along with what I already do but, I think that's for how we complement each other like that…. I think the best ways to again we go back to respect and him just hearing me out as a new teacher, just listening to what I need or to what I'm struggling with and then if he hears me out, then I get his strategies or anything that would be helpful to me as a new teacher, it's just a lot of things.

Mentor Providing Emotional Support and Resources

Mentorships convey images of someone who provides beginning teachers with an abundance of resources, but it is also someone who provides emotional support as Marissa, a science teacher from the Philippines who immigrated to the United States at the age of 34, illustrates:

> It was mainly at the end of the first year. I was barely breathing, barely breathing. I was just looking for a mentor as an emotional support…Logically, I was looking for someone to help me with classroom management and also my data, but it was emotional support if I look back… to rant about things. For example, even my friends, how can they relate to that? …a mentor can give suggestions as to how can I address that issue.

Maria also feels that her mentor gives her emotional support. Here she reflects back on those instances with her mentor:

> He asked me what areas am I struggling in or something that I am in need of and then I just tell him the areas that I'm struggling with and he gives me ideas of how to tackle those struggles and how to try to overcome those things. He has been very helpful in that side.

Selena sums it up here when she makes the analogy of her mentor as a big brother:

> I'm thinking big brother as in showing you the ropes, big brother as in helping you when you fall, motivating you and guiding you to do things better so that you don't fall into the same issues that they maybe fell on, that's how I see it…He is guiding me through this whole system how to do things and what not to do.

As cited in research conducted by Ingersoll and Smith (2008), there is a strong correlation between teacher attrition and teachers' feeling alone with little to no support emotionally or physically. These BITs' mentors filled a void that might otherwise have been detrimental to a beginning teacher's career.

Carla mentions how her mentor not only provides emotional support, but also gave her resources that were appropriate for the population of students that she teaches, enabling her to access scientific concepts that can be difficult to comprehend. All twelve BITs interviewed cited the mentor as having provided much-needed resources, the lack of which, according to Darling-Hammond (2011), is yet another reason many teachers leave the profession. As Carla stated:

> What does she know about that I can use in my population to help them take those hard science concepts and transform them into a paragraph, by using evidence, by using good concrete sources. She helps giving me a lot of tools.

Resources can include professional development and instructional strategies as Pami mentions:

> Since he a teacher for 10 years he knows the student…Gives me a lot of strategies and he observed me and he see the student, he see my classroom culture and he know the students are 9th graders…He get me strategies, he show me different ways to do it, he'd give me feedback on my teaching and UCLA have good PD that tied to the common core. I see that.

School resources are many times unknown to beginning teachers, and mentors can help navigate the roles and responsibilities of school personnel as Selena explains here.

> I know the first year of teaching I was trying to figure what the principal in terms of working with him and what their roles in helping me in the classroom…The mentor said sometimes they're just there like a father like just telling you this, what you can do and what you cannot do. Other times it could be more mentorship but I haven't found any mentorship relationship with the principal and I don't know if that's normal.

Mentors can also assist beginning teachers in collaborating with others. Research has shown that teachers who work in isolation have a higher attrition rate and lower job effectiveness than teachers who collaborate with colleagues (Haynes, 2014). As mentioned, collaboration is common in collectivistic cultures and natural for many of the BITs interviewed, as illustrated by Marissa when she discusses her time as a teacher in the Philippines:

> You work with people who you like. It wasn't really a formal collaborative relationship. It was more of, "Oh, hey, let's talk about this. Oh what about this?" It's informal questioning, but it wasn't, "Oh, let's collaborate."

Marissa is pointing out a very distinct cultural feature, that there was collaboration going on, but on an informal, human level, not a formalistic level as we have in schools here. Marissa felt that the formal, collaborative model imposed on her at her school site in the United States, is not productive, for the reasons she gives:

> How can you collaborate when you don't have that open dialogue? It would be nice to have a collaborative model where you could actually choose who you work with and you could work with them and you are doing the things that are you feel are efficient, product wise.

Mentors, in their role as collaborators, can help bring about valuable and productive collaborations between other colleagues and the beginning teacher. For example, Maria points to the way her mentor had her observe other colleagues, as a springboard to working with them:

> I am observing teachers. Actually my mentor has guided me to do that and I have been observed a lot by some of the colleagues at the same school that I teach at…Observing other teachers has been really helpful to me because I learn a lot from other teachers.

Some BITs have extended their collectivistic norms and created collaborative families where the BIT and their colleagues share stories, many pertaining to their students but also pertaining to their own families and life outside of school. For example, Pami stated:

> Yes, in the magnet we're like a little family. Everybody knows each other. But for the regular school, we don't know that much. It's only the magnet…I guess we talk about each other's problem. We talk about our lives, sometimes we sit and we have PD (professional development). When we finish the PD early we talk about what we do on the weekend and we talk about who gives us a hard time and we know the family of that kid and we call. In the magnet, I have Juan Perez right? I have Anthony Perez, Gary Perez, Luis Perez. I have the full family in my class. I know his whole family so we ... every person we know, we know beyond the classroom. They share stories with us too.

Role of Parents

Mentors' responsibilities involve assisting BITs in navigating the school arena, which includes working with parents. Because parents play such a crucial role in the education of their children, concerns about the various roles that parents play were evident in all the BIT interviews conducted for this study. The main theme that emerged in the data were parents and behavior. The expected educational role for a parent in the United States is to support the classroom teacher academically, which can take the form of tutoring at home and volunteering at school. This is not necessarily the same role expected by society in Latin America or Asia where parent support involves enforcing social norms, that is, ensuring that their child attends school and is respectful (Greenfield, Raeff, & Quiroz, 1997).

The Role of Parents as Social Agents

Ling discusses how behavior in China is viewed as the responsibility of the parent, which is typical in collectivistic countries. In collectivistic settings, society puts

pressure on parents to ensure that their child does well in school both academically and socially whereas in individualistic countries, such as the United States, that responsibility many times falls on the teacher.

> There is social pressure on you as parents that if your child is not doing well in school, it's your fault. It's because you didn't drill that concept of school, how important school is in their head enough…versus here if your child is not doing well, the school is failing them. The system is failing them. Yeah, there's social pressures on parents back home to expect them to parent well… They have to monitor how the child is doing. When the child is failing a class, it is the parents' responsibility to call the teacher because you as a parent failed, not the teacher.

Maria describes problems she is encountering with classroom management and how this would not have been the case in her native Mexico. This lack of support is typical for BITs coming from collectivistic countries where parents support teachers unconditionally and ensure that their child is well socialized according to the norms of society.

> I'm struggling with parents not being cooperative…I contacted the parents and the mom told me that she didn't even know what to do with her son. She had no options of how to even help in that situation…it was just a constant struggle with him because he didn't even respect the parents…My parents were really strict with me getting good grades and I think it would have been different.

Maria, a third year math teacher from rural Mexico, also feels that some of her students' parents are not giving her support which was unheard of in her native Mexico. "…you try to contact the parents but then they are not giving feedback or they are not helping you; that's been a very big struggle for me…"

Miki described what she encountered when she left her teaching position in China for one at an urban school in the United States. She discusses how parents in the United States want teachers to educate their children but do not take responsibility to be true partners.

> Uh, here is different. The parents are none essentially standing side by side to you. They're more like, uh, uh, opponents to you. So, if the student brings home some message like, uh, "This, this teacher is not good," the parents might come here to say, "Why do you do this way to discourage my, uh, my child from learning?" So, that is a big, big difference for me.

In Miki's quote we see an example of two parties dealing with the same problem, behavior, but seeing it through different lenses. Miki feels that parents should enforce social norms at home while she teaches academics at school. The parent on the other hand feels that enforcing social norms is not solely the responsibility of the parent but the teacher's as well. Not involving parents in academic matters may be perceived negatively by both parents and administration.

Marissa who also taught in Asia was perplexed when she saw these traditional lines of parent and teacher blurred as she shares parent responses and her thoughts here:

> "What are you doing? What are you doing? I don't know what to do with you." Actually that's more of the majority of the parents that I talk to, who I need to talk to. It's like, "... I don't know what to do with my child." In that sense, I just ... I can't really say ... Perhaps other teachers would want to advise, but I go like, "Hmm," because then I'm not a parent. I think that the parents are asking me how can they parent better. Then I feel like, "I think I can't answer that.

The perceived role of the parent and behavior also emerged when the topic of parent conferences arose. Jose, who immigrated to the United States at the age of 13 remembers how his conferences were conducted in his native El Salvador.

> When you have a parent who only finished 6th grade, what does she know about World War I, World War II? What does she know about evolution or thermodynamics? It's very clearly to me that their emphasis would be on what they know. She knows the way I behave at home.

These prior experiences, where a parent is concerned first with whether or not s/he has fulfilled their role which involves socializing their child, influence Jose when conducting parent conferences with the Latino parents of his students as he shares here.

> We don't really sit down and think about that much. We just simply tried to address the needs or what we expect the parents need to be which is, "How is my son? How is my daughter doing in the classroom?"

But Yolanda, who immigrated here at the age of five and also understands the traditional role of the parents in Mexico, feels that she needs to help her mostly Latino parents *cortar el cordón umbilical* (cut the apron strings) as she illustrates here:

> Well, the parents are mostly concerned with how is their child acting in school. That's the first thing. "Oh, just tell me if they're misbehaving or they're doing something, just let me know." To me, even though people tell me you should involve the parents more and more on your discipline or just telling how the kids should be, that's not how I see. The way that I see it is like, well, we're preparing our kids to be civilized members of society. They shouldn't have their parents on

> their backs telling them what to do, so instead of having the parents' input all of the time to look after their kid, I try to make them more independent.

Yolanda views her students as too dependent on their parents and attempts to make them independent, which is typical in individualist cultures. She realizes that in order to effectively mainstream into society, she must assist with this transition.

Carla, who also immigrated as a young age, encourages her Latino students' parents to get more involved beyond the traditional roles as she states here:

> My ideal role would be that a parent is knowledgeable of, not necessarily the content, but knowledgeable of at least what the student's goals and the teacher's goals for the student in the classroom. Not the content, just the goals… Accountability meaning, if I am going to send this to you, that you go ahead and read it. In addition to that, if we're doing an inter-disciplinary unit that you are knowledgeable about it, and that you will come to showcase night and you will be here. Your physical presence will be here for those big nights.

Nuances of Cultural Influences

There are several other significant influences that came up in the data, in the form of differences that are ultimately nuanced by culture. These cultural nuances are important because they speak to a variety of perceptions that permeate many aspects of the educational arena. They include the role of authority, tolerance for ambiguity, using criticism for normative behavior, and classroom management.

Role of the Authority

The theme of authority came up in most of the interviews. Some BITs felt that mentors and other school-based authorities should be respected and not questioned due to

their position and/or experience, which is common in collectivistic cultures. Joaquin illustrates this by seeing his mentor in the role of someone who is both an assistance and an authority figure. Here he refers to his mentor's vast background.

> I'm always going to see that authority figure. I'm working with a mentor. He's bringing this into the table, respect the knowledge. I'm always going to be attentive on what they have to say because again, that's how we view teachers. That's how we view people, that they come from and the same thing with administrators. It just feels like an authority figure… working at different schools and I see how much they question things and I'm not going to do it because they're telling me to do it or I'm not going to do this because of whatever reason. I don't see things like that. I like to feel like this is what they're planning. It's because they really believe it's the best for the staff, it's the best for the kids. I go with that. That's my intuition. Maybe it goes back to this is how I raise. This is how we saw teachers. It's just, we're going to do it like this and I'm trusting the process because that's how we just view them as a second parent figure when I was little.

Even though he views his mentor as an authority figure, Joaquin also sees her as someone who is there to support him, and draws on cultural inferences to make that supposition. He basically trusts her even though as a science teacher he has been taught to question everything.

> First of all, I place such tremendous value to her opinions and to her feedback. I have to admit, I come from a field that prides itself on questioning, questioning authority, questioning our greatest figures in the field, and that's science. That's

what make science progress, questioning. But, I have to admit that in this case, I tend not to. Again, it's an admission. I wish I could say like ... Every opportunity that I find to disagree with her, I make it known, but that's not the case. I don't know. I just simply don't know why. I think it's ... It has to be cultural the way we were brought up that we don't question our teachers.

Miki also views her mentor as an authority figure. She says,

> I have the background, grew up in exotic country, uh, as, uh, uh, new immigrant. So, my culture is like, uh, more obedient to the authority. So, in this way, we work in a, in a group but we have a clear structure to follow, so I'm used to that way.

Here Joaquin talks about how he perceives the role of authority, but in this example, he is talking about his principal.

> Yeah, like I said, that background knowledge that you're going to bring, it has to be okay because it had to be there for a reason. You just go that extra step of, "Let me see how I know how you feel by sharing this with you." Yeah, again, it all ties back into this is how you see people that come and tell you stuff. "I know better so this is what I can do for you." You kind of open up and say, "Okay, I'm going to trust the person."

Joaquin feels the same way about his mentor and how the number of years his mentor has worked as an educator impacts his view as being someone who can assist him as a beginning teacher.

> I have so many years teaching so I think I should feel like I have some credibility or I'm a good, bridge for resources because I spent so much time in the classroom

and I talk to so many people so I know I can share a lot with you." Having that, for sure, I think most important is that, human factor. Or, "You can tell me what you need and I'm going to try to help you with what I can."

Pami also gives us an example on this view of authority:

> I always respect whether I like him or not but sometimes, in American culture I see, you don't like the boss, some people talk back about that person. In my country, whether you like it or not, you cannot say. You have to give them respect. That's what I see… Here it's like more freedom. That's what I see. American view is too much freedom. Freedom is good, but there's a limit to it. To me, there should be a limit.

Selena is cognizant of where she got this idea of not questioning authority. In this instance, she talks of her principal.

> I know Latino parents always tell you if they're older than you, you have to respect them no matter what. You have to do what they (principals) say and that's how it is. The fact the he does have a higher position than I do and he is my supervisor then I definitely don't call him by his first name. I do call my mentor by his first name. I will not joke around with my principal whereas I do joke around with my mentor. I never expose any personal things to my principal but I do somewhat to my mentor… Unfortunately, right now that's how I see him. If I try to get away with something and I don't want him to paying down because I feel he will reprimand me like a parent would.

Selena is torn because she would like to experience a paradigm shift in how she views her principal but understands that her cultural norms have a strong influence. She

does have a less formal relationship with her mentor, which eases the communication process. Utilizing school personnel and posing sometimes-difficult questions when they emerge are areas that mentors attempt to instill in their beginning teachers in order to accelerate new teacher practice. But if the is not the norm for a BIT, these pathways are compromised.

Several BITs did express their comfort with approaching their elders and confronting their administrators. Hector talks about how authority was perceived in Guatemala, "Well, they were the boss. We do whatever they said, like that." But he also mentions how he is now comfortable with speaking freely with his administrator, but he still believes that the principal is boss and, ultimately, Hector will follow his directions.

> Yes, I always do. Even if they get upset or they don't like it, I do. Because I believe that I should let my voice be heard, same way as I should listen to their voice as well. I have never had a problem with that, nor them with me, and we eventually get to a consensus…There's just some things that I need to do as a teacher and there are certain things that they need to do as an administrator and, like I tell my kids, I also have to follow instructions.

Critical thinking many times involves questioning others, which is needed whenever people struggle with complex issues (Halpern, 1998). Mentors are trained to accelerate new teacher practice and ultimately increase student learning by encouraging beginning teachers to become critical thinkers and problem solvers, which involves not always accepting things as factual or unchangeable.

Tolerance for Ambiguity

According to Hofstede (2001), people from countries with a very rule-orientated society that follows well-defined and established laws and procedures are generally less tolerant towards uncertainty and ambiguity. Many of these countries lie in Asia and Latin America. But countries, such as the United States are less rule-oriented and have more tolerance for variety and experimentation. Miki talks about the frustrations she encountered upon receiving her assignment, which she found ambiguous. When she taught in China, she was given a clear curriculum, which was not the case at her new American school.

> …they should give you the clear policy, what you should do, what you shouldn't do, what they expect you to do every day. Have a clear, uh, framework where boundaries of your responsibilities and, uh, um, your duties, uh, and what the school policies over the, uh, teaching, over the immigrant, over the, uh, parents, over the language. They should set up that clearly before teacher went to the school for the first day.

This is in contrast to what she received as a teacher in China:

> Because in China, is that when you started working as a new teacher, usually, several teachers in, uh, as a new group. So, the school will give you, um, several meetings about what do you need to do, what do you have to do, how you do with the textbooks, uh, how many students you'll be have, how many classes you're gonna have, when it's gonna be your, um, meeting day, when is...This is very clear structure to follow.

Not knowing what to teach can incite feelings of inadequacy and of being lost, which can contribute to a beginning teacher's feeling overwhelmed in addition to the students not adequately learning.

Using Criticism for Normative Behavior

Cultures that are more collectivistic in nature emphasize principles of criticism for normative behavior, listening to authority, and helpfulness. Individualistic cultures use praise as a tool to positively affect normative behavior (Quiroz & Greenfield, 1996). Jose's recollections of parent conferences in El Salvador help him understand his Latino students' parents' emphasis on punitive actions to change behavior. An example of this includes:

> Their role is usually to enforce discipline and a lot of times, I think a lot of times they also expect the teachers to enforce discipline. Sometimes, I'm pretty sure that they expect it to be physical.

In yet another example, Yolanda describes Latino parent responses when she conferences with them.

> "Let me know if they're doing anything," "Give them extra homework," or, "Do this." It's like spanking them in the butt without not really spanking them in the butt.

Maria, a third year math teacher from rural Mexico, recalls how her parents viewed education and discipline when she went to school in Mexico. When asked about the differing roles of parents in Mexico and the United States, she states:

> Probably different because from what I saw when I was younger, the parents were very into their student's education. I mean my parents were really strict with me getting good grades and I think it would have been different.

Yolanda understands that some cultures emphasize the negative, to achieve normative behavior, more than others. She explained how she, as the teacher, is trying to reverse that mindset.

> I want them to be just more supportive of the stuff that they do, and just giving them appraisal for the good things that they do. Even if it's a small success, even if their kid had Ds and fails all their life, but then all of a sudden they got a C in a test or they got a C in one of the classes, just give them applause for that. That, to me, is more supportive because I can't assume that their parents know the subject…My parents couldn't help me at home, and so for me, the biggest support was just having my mom even offer me a glass of chocolate milk. That, to me, was enough. I just want them to support their kids.

Classroom Management

All BITs were asked what were some of the most important things they felt that new teachers needed to learn and master early in their teaching. Classroom management came up in almost all of the responses which is no surprise considering that it is a concern that most teachers nationwide experience as we see in Ling's example. Ling, who taught in China, described how classroom management negatively affected her thinking,

> Classroom management is really not needed in China because kids are so well trained at home. Just a look from the teacher would just totally kill anything

would eventually escalating to anything else. Here, teachers facing a lot of things. I was literally attacked by a parent last year and I had to file a police report because his child was stealing from my class and his child was expelled by the dean. She came to my class to just attack me in front of all the children. I know. You would never face this in China. I lost my train of thought.

Pami also expresses the frustrations that she encountered as a first year math teacher.

> …I don't have a lot of parents involved at my school and there's no discipline. Yes, so some student will come up to me, would call me B word, would tell me I should come back to my country. One female student called me that ... one day I told her not to play in the class and she just got mad at me. She said she wished I got raped and I confront the school but there's nothing they can do. Just write it down but nothing happening.

Difficulties with classroom management are cited as a major reason for beginning teachers to leave the profession. But for teachers coming from collectivistic countries this can be even more daunting due to their experiences with the role that respect has on teachers in their countries of origin.

Summary

The findings from this study show that, overall, BITs encountered many culturally-based obstacles during their beginning years as secondary math or science teachers in a large urban school district. The data also revealed that many of these obstacles were lessened through the assistance of their mentor. Mentors served in various capacities as cited by their BITs. Mentor support took the form of providing emotional support, resources, guidance, links with other educators, and cultural-clarifications.

As stated throughout, the primary focus of this study has been to show the critical roles that culture and cultural differences play in the mentoring process. While the specific cultures of the BIT and mentor did play a role in establishing a strong relationship between them, making explicit the cultural differences proved to be most beneficial. Through this clarification, the BIT was able to more successfully navigate through the school arena.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter begins with a brief summary of the current study, which includes an overview of the problem, purpose statement, research question, methodology used, and summary of major findings. Following the introduction, the discussion section will provide an analysis of the findings. After the analysis section are the implications for policy and practice, followed by suggestions for future research. The conclusion ends this chapter.

Summary of the Study

This grounded theory based, qualitative study explored one central research question: How does culture play a role in the Beginning Immigrant Teacher (BIT)/mentor relationship? The data suggest that the nuances of the BIT's culture impacted the relationship with their mentor and ultimately impacted the mentors' role in assisting the BIT with navigating the educational arena. As originally conceived, a large portion of the study was going to be about the culture of the BIT and of the mentor and how the dynamics of differing cultures affected their relationship. However, as the study progressed, it became apparent that the mentoring process, as it was articulated in the interviews, became more about understanding the new cultural nuances that emerged. More importantly, it became about how such nuances inflect and affect the clarity and effectiveness of the mentor. We must also remember that ultimately the mentor is intended to serve as a cultural guide to U.S. schooling for the BIT by helping to create a blueprint for accelerating effective teacher practices thereby increasing student learning.

According to Fee (2010), in order for school districts and universities to provide proper support for immigrant teachers, it is important to know the range of issues that

these teachers face. A study conducted by Carrison (2007) explored how the differences between educational systems in immigrant teachers' native countries and the country where they presently teach affect the teachers' experiences. This study found that cultural differences, both in everyday life and pedagogical style, do impact the effective transition of immigrant teachers into classrooms. Proper support, which includes assigning mentors, can help ease the transition of these teachers into their new educational setting by eliminating some of these cultural barriers. Eliminating these barriers can positively affect student achievement. But in order for the mentor to eliminate these barriers, cultural barriers must be recognized and understood.

According to a study conducted by Ingersoll (2015), school districts in the United States are losing over 2.5 billion dollars a year due to teacher attrition. His research also uncovered the fact that minority teachers, who include BITs, are more likely to drop out than white, non-Hispanic teachers. Ingersoll found that assigning mentors to beginning teachers is one way to lower this alarming attrition rate, but mentors can only assist beginning teachers in producing effective changes in the long run if the mentors are focusing more on ***why*** something is happening rather than on ***how*** to provide a quick fix. This ***why*** involves understanding BITs' cultural norms and values. If cultural norms and values are not understood, the path taken on by the mentor may be fraught with obstacles.

Carrison, (2007) found in her research that these cultural perspectives encompass BITs' preexisting educational paradigms as well as their cultural communication styles and can directly impact how others perceive them. According to Ingersoll and Smith (2004), the main objective of mentoring programs is to give beginning teachers a local guide to help them navigate the new school arena. If mentors do not understand how a

BIT's culture can affect his/her perceptions, how will a mentor be able to take on the role of guide if the path is unclear?

The mentors in this study were all trained using the same mentoring curriculum created by a national mentoring organization, the National Teacher Center (NTC). The roles that a mentor takes on such as—a problem solver, advocate, collaborator, and coach are emphasized throughout the professional development created by NTC. All mentor roles outlined are contingent on building a strong relationship with the beginning teacher. However, building significant relationships begins with understanding the population with whom you want to build a relationship (Raeff, Greenfield & Quiroz, 2000).

Not understanding the cultural norms and values of a beginning teacher creates a potential problem in the mentoring process. If the mentor is to accelerate the improvement of new teacher practice, which ultimately increases student learning, then a plan of addressing how to move a teacher forward needs to be created. But mentors and beginning teachers may not share common visions of teaching, learning, or even the mentoring relationship itself (Wang & Odell, 2002). Most mentors are veteran teachers who have adapted to the norms and values accepted by society in the United States, which according to Hofstede (2001) are very individualistic. The mere fact that these mentors have been identified as teacher leaders demonstrates that these mentors have navigated the educational arena with much success. But some beginning teachers come from cultures that are more collectivist in nature and emphasize principles of working in groups, not standing out, listening to authority, using criticism to shape normative behavior, and helpfulness (Quiroz & Greenfield, 1996). These cultural norms and values between mentors and BITs may not align with Feiman-Nemser's (1998) definition of

mentoring which "…involves a shared vision of good teaching that guides the work of the mentor, an image of how beginning teachers learn to teach, a repertoire of mentoring strategies and skills, and adopting a stance of a learner" (Feiman-Nemser, 1998, p.63). If cultural values are not aligned, a common vision may not develop. Carrison, (2007) found in her research that these cultural perspectives encompass BITs' preexisting educational paradigms as well as their cultural communication styles and can directly impact how others perceive them.

The current study demonstrated that when mentors understand their BITs' cultural norms and values, they can then use that cultural knowledge to accelerate targeted BIT practice and ultimately increase student learning. Therefore, this study will contribute professional knowledge to the field of mentoring with the goal of providing mentors recommendations for working with BITs. These recommendations could in turn increase BIT/mentor effectiveness, lower BIT attrition rates, and positively impact student achievement. Additionally, this study will suggest areas for future research so that this void in addressing the needs of BITs is more thoroughly understood and addressed.

Chapter 4 gave voice to concerns and experiences of these new teachers via the interviews, which were the primary data source for this study. Specifically, these interviews addressed the experiences that BITs had as novice teachers working in a large, urban school district, which included receiving the support of an assigned mentor. The findings in the chapter answered my research question and provided insight regarding how the cultural nuances of the BIT affected their relationship with their mentor. The interview narratives brought to light how Asian and Latino immigrants, regardless of the number of years they have been in the United States, still maintain strong cultural and

collectivistic norms and values that affect the way they perceive individualistic situations that arise in the educational arena. These cultural perceptions may inflect and affect the clarity and effectiveness of the mentor.

Discussion

The Central Role of Culture

Uncovering the role of culture in the BIT/mentor relationship, through the use of qualitative interviews, exposed eight major themes: cultural adaptations, cultural connectedness, the role of the teacher, the role of the mentor, the role of parents, the role of authority, tolerance for ambiguity, and using criticism for normative behavior. These themes were fully described in Chapter 4.

It is important to note, that like individuals, institutions, such as schools, have cultural identities. Understanding school culture and being able to navigate the school arena is crucial for teacher success (Bartlett, 2014). But BITs may have different cultural values and norms, which can affect their perceptions of what occurs in the school arena between the school's stakeholders such as peers, parents, students and administration. The themes that emerged in the data represent some of the cultural differences that affected the BITs' navigation of their school's culture.

Cultural Adaptations

Because this study explored the role of culture in the BIT/mentor relationship, it was important to establish whether or not culture was even perceived as something of importance in the daily life of a BIT. The findings indicated that most BITs were cognizant that norms and values permeated a variety of aspects of the school arena, including their relationship with their mentor. The age at the time of immigration ranged

from 5- 34 years, which impacted their acculturation. Several BITs mentioned having to make cultural adaptations to their new setting. The older the BIT was when s/he immigrated to the United States, the more difficult the transition appeared to be. This is consistent with the research of Kurtz-Costes and Pungello (2000) that found a strong correlation between adaptation and years in the new environment.

Miki immigrated to the United States at the age of 30 after having taught in her native China for several years. When asked if she felt culture had a role in her teaching, she responded,

> Yes, it definitely can because I have the background, grew up in exotic country, as a new immigrant. …However, here is more like an individual emphasize. So, you or yourself, how you work, what is the result going to be depends on you. So, that is a big frenzy for me. I need some time to absorb that and adjust to it.

As a result, Miki felt isolated in her new surroundings compared to what she was accustomed to in China. In China, she collaborated daily with her colleagues but did not encounter this in her new urban school in the United States where many teachers end up working in isolation. Fortunately for Miki, she found another teacher from China to plan and collaborate with, as she explains here.

> I didn't know; I don't have textbooks. Even by the end of the day, I didn't have the teacher's workbook, so basically, just me and the other teacher, we just, developed based on the state's framework. Based on that one, then we developed our own materials, our topics, themes and then we see how it goes. If it went well then we just keep planning more. It didn't go well, we're gonna either replan something or go back reteach that part.

Marissa, who also taught in Asia, described how she was at a deficit when it came to being assigned to her first school in the United States as a 34-year-old teacher who formally taught in both Japan and in the Philippines for several years. She attempted to clarify unanswered concerns, but her many questions were perceived as a weakness, and she faced repercussions from her administrators as a result.

> I am not even visualizing what I need to do, so when people ask me, 'What do you need?' I'm like, 'I don't know, because I don't know what that is.' When I got there, I knew I had to ask questions. I asked a lot of questions, but I think perhaps my issue was I asked too many questions…That got me into trouble because it gave me an image of being a needy teacher, of not really knowing what I had to do.

Beginning teachers whose culture is not aligned with the dominant culture found in the school can experience conflict (Pincas, 2001). This conflict is not just a result of different teaching styles, but may be a result of attempting to connect to both the local culture of the school and to the learning environment. Marissa was attempting to better understand her new role as a first year BIT in a new country.

Administrators should be aware that navigating the educational arena is daunting for any beginning teacher, but for BITs it can be overwhelming, as Marissa pointed out. Not only does she need to learn the systems in place, but she must learn the sometimes-invisible cultural nuances as well. Her seeking answers to questions was not treated as her looking for opportunities to grow, but as a weakness by her administration. Marissa also mentioned how she was reprimanded for not smiling and looking directly at her administrator and school-assigned mentor in the eye as we see in her citation.

> I meant that kind of harassment pretty much or they would say, "Oh, your tone," or even, "You don't smile"…"Next time can you be more, 'Good job,' happy, smile?"... Even my voice. They said it's too monotone. That kind of harassment… I think perhaps in the Philippines, people are happier, but then no one is going to say, "How come she is not smiling?"…I got so used to Japan where you don't look straight to the eye. I probably look like I'm shifty; they said I have arresting and an offensive face. I'm not even doing anything.

Parrish and Linder-VanBershot (2010) state that educators may incorrectly assume that certain behaviors of immigrant teachers are a result of personality when in actuality the behavior is a result of culture. For example, in collectivistic countries, looking at someone directly in the eye may be perceived as rude and/or menacing. Smiling is also reserved for more social gatherings, as opposed to work settings, and not as common as in the United States. Carrison, (2007) found in her research that these cultural perspectives encompass BITs' preexisting educational paradigms as well as their cultural communication styles, which can directly impact how others perceive them. One section in the New Teacher Center (NTC) training manual mentions that evidence of trust between mentor and beginning teacher could include eye contact, smiling, and touching. If a mentor is not cognizant that these signs may not be the cultural norm of the BIT, misunderstandings may occur. This is important for educators working with immigrant teachers to understand so they can avoid misinterpretations or assumptions about why someone appears resistant to adopting a different point of view as to prevent possible conflict. It is also be incumbent upon the mentor to make these cultural differences explicit to the BIT. By explaining what the norms and expectations are in the mainstream

culture of the United States, a clearer path is set for the BIT. This path leads towards acculturation where both cultures are accepted and neither is perceived as superior.

Kaito, who like Marissa studied in Japan, mentions how having students stand out for attention was something that he did not encounter in Japan.

> …class clown is not somebody that people look upon. Other students will not look upon the funny guy in the classroom. Will be, oh yeah, he's funny, he's fun. It's more of looked down upon. Yeah. I think you don't want to stand out like that. There's definitely a peer pressure, especially probably in the teenage years where you don't want to stand out as a dumb kid or something.

This tendency of people in collectivistic cultures to not like standing out from the group is captured by various aphorisms. In some Asian cultures, there is a saying that aptly references that tendency: "The nail on the wheel gets pounced on," or, alternatively, "The nail that sticks up gets pounded down," which means that it is more accepted to blend in with the group and not draw attention to oneself or one's behavior. This is in direct contrast with the United States that has the saying, "The squeaky wheel always gets the grease." (Zepeda, Gonzalez-Mena, Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2006). Standing out from a group is encouraged in the United States from early on, but drawing attention to oneself can be perceived as disrespectful by a classroom teacher from a collectivistic country. A mentor, who has emerged from the education system in the United States successfully, may see the benefits of emphasizing the individualistic norm of standing out from the group because that is what is familiar to him or her. But BITs, whose cultural norms differ from this belief, may encounter conflict, which can permeate aspects of the

school arena such as classroom management, faculty meetings, and/or parent conferences.

Cultural Connectedness

Almost all of the BITs (92%) mentioned, during the interviews, that they felt that having similar or dissimilar cultural connections with mentors and/or other educators had an impact when forming relationships and understandings in their new setting. Strong cultural connections were attributed to being from the same country of origin and/or having lived the immigrant experience.

The research findings indicated that in instances when a mentor was assigned to a beginning teacher from a similar background, a comfortable and familiar arena for discourse created a strong foundational support for the relationship. These foundations must exist before a mentor can begin to approach classroom changes because they involve trust, respect and understanding. Mentor programs do not necessarily take into consideration aligning the culture of the BIT with that of the mentor. Cultural alignment can often assist the mentoring process because strong cultural connections can lower the affective filter/anxiety level. When I am assigned a Spanish-speaking BIT, I let him or her know of my Latino background and that we can communicate in either English or Spanish. This has proven immensely useful in establishing a foundation of familiarity and common ideals, experiences, and values, creating a receptivity for the mentoring that follows.

The Role of the Teacher

Teachers play an obviously central role in education, yet educators from different cultural backgrounds perceive their fundamental roles differently. The four themes that

emerged from the data pertaining to the role of the teacher were: teachers' and students' responsibilities, the teacher as a second parent, respect, and knowing and bonding with students.

Teacher and Student Responsibility

Many BITs mentioned how in their country of origin the responsibility for academic success lies with the student, which is the norm in collectivistic countries. While teachers disseminate academic content, ultimately it is up to the student to learn it. If the student fails, the blame is on the student not the teacher. In schools in the United States, the responsibility for student success is generally placed on the teacher.

This cultural paradigm is very important because many times the beginning teachers are asked by administrators to make the necessary modifications for struggling students. If the BIT feels that learning is the student's responsibility this may cause confusion or reluctance to follow through. Even though a BIT with a different cultural perspective may feel that learning is primarily the responsibility of the student, participants in this study, such as Hector (see Chapter 4), moved towards a more centrist approach and set of beliefs as to where the responsibility for learning lies. The degree of one's collectivism or individualism on the continuum is influenced by socioeconomic status, level of formal education, and whether the individual was raised in a rural versus urban environment. (Greenfield, Trumbull, et al., 2006). However, this movement along the continuum is different for every BIT, depending on the age they immigrated, the degree of collectivism in their country of origin, and which influences have impacted their lives.

The Teacher as a Second Parent

The teacher in collectivistic countries is often perceived by the student and parent as a "second parent," as several BITs mentioned in their interviews. Parents in collectivistic countries feel that it is the right of the teacher to correct students when they go astray, in the same manner a parent would. Parents feel that teachers play an important role in shaping the future of the students under their care and are afforded a great deal of respect.

One important role that a mentor serves is to assist beginning teachers in creating strong partnerships with other important stakeholders, such as parents. Much of the collaboration between teachers and parents is initiated at the secondary level during the parent conference. Many immigrant parents will begin with asking how their child is behaving. Teachers should be encouraged to solidify a partnership. I have worked at schools where reminders were sent out to all teachers emphasizing that parent conferences are for academic purposes only and teachers should not encourage discussion related to behavior. This is an example of a cultural disconnect. I have found that if parents are not given an opportunity to verify if their roles as social agents have been met, the intended collaboration becomes a one-way discourse where the teacher does all of the talking and the parent is not validated for their contribution (Greenfield, Quiroz, & Raeff, 2000; Greenfield, Raeff, & Quiroz, 1998).

Mentors need to be aware of the parental roles that exist in collectivistic cultures if they are to support their BITs with their parent conferences and any other interactions with parents. Because parents set the foundation for how their children relate to peers and adults, it is vital for teachers to encourage two-way dialogues where both parties learn

from each other. It is important to note that we should not be using cultural differences as an excuse for low expectations. Instead, with the mentor's aid and guidance, the BIT must learn to use his or her cultural understanding of what is needed for academic success in the United States by being proactive and providing parents suggestions.

Teachers and Respect

The theme of respect and teachers came up in all of the interviews. As stated earlier, parents in collectivistic countries expect teachers to be as respected as parents are at home. All BITs stated that respect for the teacher was far greater in their native countries than it was here in the United States. When many BITs begin teaching in the United States, they encounter shock in terms of student comportment. They were not accustomed to students talking and not obeying the classroom rules; this is all perceived as being disrespectful to the classroom teacher.

Ling, one of the participants in this study, mentioned how her mentor did not impose a value on either set of cultural beliefs in terms of teacher respectability, but instead provided an explicit explanation of cultural differences between the United States and China. This understanding proved to be essential because, without it, Ling would not have been able to move forward with new and appropriate classroom management strategies.

Knowing and Bonding with Students

Several of the BITs felt that the role of the teacher may involve knowing their students beyond the academic setting and/or continuing to have ties with the student even after the student had completed the year. Research suggests that positive interpersonal relationships are extremely important in collectivistic Latino cultures especially among

teachers and students and play a major role in a student's academic drive (Anthrop-Gonzalez, Velez, & Garret, 2003). As was evident in the interviews, administrators and other educators may misinterpret these actions as too domineering and as preventing the student from maturing.

Role of the Mentor

The data indicated that mentors assisted BITs in navigating the often-times confusing culture of the school. By serving as cross-cultural clarifiers, mentors assisted BITs by creating a bridge to understanding, which assisted BITs with culturally adapting to their new environments, crucial for teacher effectiveness. A study conducted by Carrison (2007) explored how the differences between educational systems in immigrant teachers' native countries and the country where they presently teach affect the teachers' experiences. The study found that cultural differences both in everyday life and pedagogical style may impact the effective transition of immigrant teachers into classrooms. As Al-Issa's (2005) research found, participants will most likely revert to their past norms in handling cultural conflict. This is important for mentors to understand so that they assist their BIT with acculturating more effectively through an understanding of the two different sets of norms and values. When beginning teachers view themselves as better decision- makers and engage in more effective classroom practices, they may experience greater job satisfaction, improve their instructional capacity, and, in doing so, positively impact student achievement. Hector described how his mentor served as a liaison to help him navigate his school culture:

> Back in my country, students don't really work in groups that much. It's only the higher levels, like when you go to college over there. Rarely you do it in high

> school, rarely. But here, the education in the US, at least in this state, or at least in this district, they want the kids to work in groups all the time which works…What my mentor explained is that the students have this special language because of their age and the way they see things that they communicate and the way I explain it might not be as easy for them to understand as the friend or the group member explained it. So, I see the importance in that.

Two different points emerge in this example. In collectivistic cultures, the learning relationship is primarily between the teacher and the child; having students ask each other for assistance and bypassing the teacher is not the norm. In addition, classrooms in these countries are generally teacher-centered where students are to be spoken to and not necessarily heard. Hector now works for a school district that often presents teachers with student-centered pedagogical practices including student engagement, student led conferences, and more student talk. But for teachers to implement these pedagogical strategies, they must understand the thinking and research behind them for true buy-in. Hugo may have gone through the motions and attempted to do cooperative learning but not until his mentor gave the rationale behind it did he accept it as sound teaching. When discussing pedagogical practices, I ask my beginning teacher which practices they are familiar with and go from there. When we teach, we are not only disseminating what we know, but how we come to know information as well. This lends a credibility, which helps teachers accept it as useful. Teaching and learning are not only embedded in culture, they are the means to culture. Beginning teachers often rely on what is familiar to them, whether it is effective or not.

In order to create a new practice, the old practice needs to be re-examined by analyzing data and planning next steps, which may include experimenting with new practices. These are all steps that a mentor is trained to take. But if a mentor or administrator is not aware of why a beginning teacher is set on teaching a certain way, their practices may be perceived as lazy or defiant. If mentors are to serve as guides for beginning teachers, they must know their client well before a plan can be devised.

In collectivistic cultures, parents play a major role in their children's decision-making. But in the United States, emphasis is placed on individual choice. Mentors accustomed to the latter may interpret that a collectivistic parent is too controlling and suggest to BIT that they need to "cut the cords" and promote student independence, which may be confusing for the BIT. Since Yangna Unified services thousands of immigrants from collectivistic countries such as Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, and China, BITs may be more in tune with the parents' norms and values than the mentors. Therefore, mentors need to be aware that sometimes the clarification may come from the BIT, especially if the culture is similar to or the same as the BIT, as we see in the case of Selena. Selena mentions how she had to explain to her mentor why many of her students were truant.

Iredale (2001) suggests that understanding the unique perspectives of minority teachers is important in creating and implementing more effective programs for recruitment, mentorship, and professional development of such teachers. More often than not, the BIT critically inflects the cultural dynamic that develops with the mentor; learning can be reciprocal in the BIT/mentor relationship. If cultural differences are hindering the mentor and beginning teacher relationship, beginning teachers, and

subsequently their students, may not be receiving the vital support that they need, which in this case would be planning next steps to decrease truancy based on identified causes.

Role of Parents

All BITs mentioned the role of parents. Many mentioned the responsibility of parents to socialize their children to the norms accepted by society, as well as the role parents play in their child's career choice. They also referenced parent use of negativity as a social means to modify behavior and other forms of discipline.

The Role of Parents as Social Agents

In collectivistic cultures, the role of the teacher is to educate the child formally and the role of the parent is to socialize the child. The roles are understood by all parties and rarely crossed. Often, crossing traditional lines and systems of belief caused confusion for many of the BITs. We might remember Marissa (Chapter 4), as she encountered different responses from her students' parents in the United States than what she was familiar with as a teacher in both Japan and the Philippines.

According to a research study conducted by Fuller (2010), since teachers in Latin America are so respected, many Latino parents, especially those with little formal education, feel that they can't possibly play an important role in their children's educational development. This is the norm in collectivistic countries, which includes Marissa's country of origin, China. This causes Marissa and other BITs confusion because they never encountered questions posed by parents in their native country.

Selena, another one of the participants in this study, learned that her new role as a teacher in the United States is to teach parents what to do in times of uncertainty. Unlike Marissa, who immigrated to the United States in her 30s, Selena arrived as an elementary

student, so she has had more time to assimilate to the practices of teachers and parents in the United States and understand the roles that parents and teachers may take on. And as I have stated previously, the duration of time in the United States, as well as when immigration occurred, does affect the ease and level of acculturation.

Selena is aware that many times teachers are encouraged to give parents suggestions for what steps they can take at home to better support learning. This would not necessarily be discussed at a school in a collectivistic country because the role of the teacher is to formally educate the child and the role of the parent is to socially educate the child. Selena understood that there are different expectations here in the United States. For a BIT, from a collectivistic country, who has not had the opportunity to acquire information on the role parents play in the United States, having a parent ask for answers or suggestions may be confusing and even confrontational. Mentors need to understand these differences in cultural norms so that their BIT can be coached to be more responsive to students' parents who may not share their collectivistic orientation.

Jose, another participant in the study, said that parent conferences were not the norm in El Salvador and generally occurred when there was a problem with discipline, which was extremely rare because parents put much pressure on their children to succeed. His experience of having the teacher as the sole decision-maker and viewed as the authority in terms of a child's education in his native El Salvador has influenced the way he holds conferences here in the United States. He said, "We just simply tried to address their needs or what we expect the parents need to be which is, 'How is my son? How is my daughter doing in the classroom?'…Their role is usually to enforce discipline…"

After I posed the question as to whether he has discussed parent conferences with his mentor, he responded,

> I don't think we've ever had that conversation…Your questions are making me think as to ... Is this something that I need to look at myself? Could I teach my parents, my student's parents, perhaps, how to conduct the better parent conference? Not just with me, but then with me and then apply it with other teachers? It never occurred to me that there could be a better way to conduct the parent conference from the point of view of the parent, because I can't completely imagine the way Salvadorian parents for instance what their expectations would be once they're meeting with the teacher, but is there a better approach?

The BIT is reflecting back on his experiences as a student in El Salvador and how parent conferences were conducted, if ever. My clarifying questions asking him to recall his previous experiences in El Salvador triggered a self-reflection in terms of how his conferences here in the United States mirror those in El Salvador and whether or not they could be improved upon. Self-reflection is emphasized throughout mentor training. A reflection is more than just a mere recollection of past events. The goal of reflection is to link and construct meaning from past experiences in order to create an action plan. The ultimate goal is to apply what has been learned to new contexts. But if mentors do not take BITs back to that original experience, and/or do not understand how to bridge the prior collectivistic experience to the new individualistic one, a valuable learning opportunity may be lost.

Carla, a study participant who immigrated from rural Mexico at the age of five, mentioned in Chapter 4 that she would like the Latino parents of her students to know her

goals, and attend school events. Even though this was not her experience growing up, she sees the value of having parents involved more than in just providing behavioral support. She also immigrated here at a young age and has acculturated to the norms of her new individualistic environment. She knows what is expected of parents as she illustrates here.

Yangna Unified emphasizes in its district goals for parent engagement that teachers should "…invite parents to participate as equal partners in the education of their children" (p. 2). A BIT who has not acculturated as much as Carla has may not see or understand how this role can look like and would need a mentor to provide some clarification and guidance on first steps. In addition to wanting the parents of her Latino students to understand the larger goals and be more physically present, Carla understands the emphasis on behavior and how Latino parents sometimes use negative actions to modify behavior, but she also wants to move beyond having parents taking only that role.

> …the parent might not again, know the content that the child is learning, but at least, their behavior is going to be positive. Embrace the difficulty that the student may be going through in order to understand the content. Provide that positive reinforcement to the child…For example, not always am I going to have a conversation where it's viewed that it's going to be negative towards your child. It could also be positive…

The Role of the Parent as Social Agent

The role of students showing respect came up in all of the interviews. Many BITs felt that there was a lack of respect on the part of the students with the teacher, something that was not common in their native countries because parents demand that their child

treat their teachers with the same respect that is afforded to them. The role of the parent in collectivistic countries is to make sure that they are doing their part by socializing their child, which includes ensuring that their child is respectful in class. All BITs mentioned that parents in their native countries were more supportive in ensuring that their child's behavior was respectful than parents in the United States were. They described the parents and guardians, in their native countries, as people who set clear expectations for proper conduct. No BIT mentioned recalling any major issue involving classroom management in their country of origin, which could further support the important role parents assume as social agents in collectivistic countries.

But several BITs mentioned how frustrating it was when parents do not support teachers here in the United States as Miki shared, "…here is different. The parents are none essentially standing by side to you. They're more like opponents to you." Miki is perplexed as to why many of the students' parents do not support her decisions when it comes to discipline and grades as she states here, "This teacher is not good… Why do you do this way to discourage my child from learning?" In China, teachers rarely resort to contacting the parent but when it occurs, the parent generally supports the teacher and is embarrassed that their role, to ensure that their child is well adjusted, has not been met. Miki mentioned, as did other BITs, that they worry about parents complaining to administration about their practices, which were efficient in their country of origin but are no longer here.

As seen in the data, several BITs understood the traditional role of the parent in collectivistic societies but approach it differently. Jose, who immigrated to the United States as a teenager, and teaches in a Latino community, generally refrains from content

related discourse and allows the conversation to revolve around matters involving the child's behavior. But Yolanda, who immigrated here at a younger age than Jose, feels that she needs to help her mostly Latino parents *cortar el cordón umbilical* (cut the apron strings) as she illustrates here:

> Well, the parents are mostly concerned with how is their child acting in school. …we're preparing our kids to be civilized members of society. They shouldn't have their parents on their backs telling them what to do, so instead of having the parents input all of the time to look after their kid, I try to make them more independent.

Yolanda views her students as too dependent on their parents and attempts to make them independent, which is typical in individualist cultures. She realizes that in order for them to effectively mainstream into society, she must assist with this transition. She uses student led conferences where students do much of the talking and the parents generally listen and occasionally ask questions. These types of conferences are more common in individualistic countries than in more collectivistic ones because the student is in charge, which is contrary to the traditional role of authority. Her time and experiences in the United States have brought her to this place on the continuum, but this may not be the case for a BIT who immigrated to the United States at a later stage in life. Mentors are trained to promote the belief that parents play a pivotal role in the education of their child and should be seen as partners in their learning. But for many BITs, parents do not traditionally take on that role, which can create confusion when this discourse and situation arises.

Nuances of Cultural Influences

As stated in chapter 4, there were several other significant influences that emerged in the data, in the form of differences that are ultimately nuanced by culture. Understanding the nuances of a BIT's culture is important because they can inflect and affect the effectiveness of the mentor, which in turn, directly impacts the mentor's relationship with their beginning teacher. The cultural nuances that emerged in the data speak to a variety of perceptions that permeate many aspects of the educational arena. They include the role of authority, tolerance for ambiguity, using criticism for normative behavior, and classroom management.

Role of Authority

Viewed from a collectivistic perspective, the role of authority in a school setting can mean not questioning educators who are older, who have seniority, and/or have higher positions; these include veteran teachers, administrators, and mentors. There was some evidence that BITs viewed authority exclusively through a collectivistic lens, which meant that figures of authority were rarely questioned. Half of the BITs cited that figures of authority, such as their principals and mentors, were rarely questioned even if they disagreed.

Such feelings about authority are common, particularly in Asian society where one does not speak their mind to a person of authority. Pami, one of the Asian BITs interviewed for the study felt that here in the United States, too many teachers disrespected her principal, and she went so far as to state that this freedom (to disrespect authority) should be curtailed. In the United States, teachers are instructed to teach and model critical thinking skills, which may involve questioning accepted norms (Halpern,

1998). Pami viewed this frame of mind as disrespectful; she does not feel comfortable or worthy of approaching her administrator even when she felt his actions were wrong. The ramifications of this mindset can trickle into not getting clear guidance, acting contrary to what one believes is the best path, and being perceived as weak. As cultural navigation guides, mentors are taught to encourage beginning teachers to locate and utilize the resource personnel at the school, which includes administrators, and to establish relationships with them. If the BIT is reluctant to approach these key players in the school arena and/or ask questions, it can cause confusion on all parties.

In addition, mentors who have been trained by NTC are taught to differentiate their mentoring and assume different roles depending on the teachers' needs. A mentor can be instructive and direct the interaction; a mentor can be collaborative and guide interaction without directing it; or a mentor can be facilitative and have the teacher actively direct the flow of information. But if a teacher views a mentor through the lens of an authority figure who should not be questioned, a mentor may assume that an instructive role is necessary most of the time which may not be addressing the BIT's needs and accelerating their practice.

A mentor's role involves helping beginning teachers work closely with all resource personnel and connect with their administrators but if BITs feel that administration is unapproachable and unquestionable, using the administrator as an instructional leader for support in addition to building a relationship with him or her may not take place. But not all BITs felt this way. BITs like Maria who immigrated at the age of five sees administration in a different light and more as a resource. She goes on to say, "Even though they are administrators and they are authority in this school but I see them

more as resource people to go." This is consistent with findings that show that teachers move along the continuum as they slowly acculturate to their new surroundings.

Tolerance for Ambiguity

BITs who taught in their native countries expressed confusion when faced with unclear directions. People in collectivistic countries are generally uncomfortable when situations are unstructured. These cultures try to minimize such confusing situations by enacting strict guidelines. This can have a major impact for a teacher coming from a collectivistic country to the United States. Teachers in collectivistic countries are given clear directions on what is to be taught and what resources are to be used. This is vastly different from Yangna Unified where many teachers are given state standards but it is up to them to determine how those standards will be taught and what resources to use. This has become much more the case with the introduction of the Common Core State Standards, which are even more open-ended in terms of how these standards are to be rolled out in classrooms, nationwide. Here Miki gives a clear example of the confusion she encountered, "they should give you the clear policy what you should do, what you shouldn't do, what they expect you to do every day…They should set up that clearly before teacher went to the school the first day." Marissa, who taught in both Japan and in the Philippines, began to ask many questions, "I'm like, "I am not even visualizing what I need to do"…When I go there, I asked too many questions…That got me into trouble because it gave me an image of being a needy teacher, of not knowing what to do." Not only was Marissa feeling overwhelmed and lost but was perceived by administration and staff as weak, which added further anxiety. Thus, there are two variables here: the teachers' experiences in their home culture and their unfamiliar experiences teaching in

the United States. Mentors need to ensure that all of their beginning teachers have an academic roadmap for their content and that steps are taken to ensure that benchmarks are met. But for a BIT, creating such a 'map' may be a new and confusing experience in and of itself. A mentor cannot accelerate new teacher practice and thus increase student learning if an academic game plan has not been established. This is also important for educational policy makers, and leaders to know because many new teachers, especially those from collectivistic cultures, end up working in isolation and were not accustomed to creating their own curriculum. This can have major ramifications if the BIT has no one to collaborate with, which can negatively impact student achievement.

Using Criticism for Normative Behavior

In collectivistic countries, it is common to use criticism of children to promote normative behavior. Parents often criticize their children when they want the child to change his/her behavior. Many BITs were aware of this dynamic and how this sometimes trickles back into their classrooms when they have conferences with immigrant parents. Several mentioned encouraging the parent to also view the positive in the child as Carla stated, "When asked about how parent should parent teachers, Carla responds, "…not always am I going to have a conversation where it's viewed that it's going to be negative towards your child. It could also be positive."

Mentors, not accustomed to the cultural nuance of using criticism for normative behavior may view parent conferences through a different lens. Mentors, trained by NTC, are trained in using a graphic aid that is intended to support collaborative interactions between teachers and families. This tool includes essential topics including emphasizing the positive, which is listing the students' strengths. Although this tool can encourage

beginning teachers in developing strategies for promoting interaction with families, it may be confusing for a BIT who does not understand the individualistic emphasis of praise as a means to affecting behavior. In addition, when the culture of the BIT and the parent are similar, the emphasis on praise may cause further confusion because neither party understands the rationale. Mentors need to be aware of these differing approaches when preparing their BITs for parent conferences.

Classroom Management

As stated in chapter 4, all BITs mentioned classroom management as one of the most critical areas that new teachers needed to learn and master early in their teaching in order to operate an effective classroom. As Joaquin stated when asked this question, "Most important? For sure, classroom structure- meaning, classroom management." Most beginning teachers encounter obstacles with issues involving classroom management but for teachers coming from collectivistic cultures, these issues can be even more daunting due to their reliance of past experiences, many of which took place in collectivistic settings where issues of classroom management are not as prevalent. As found by a study conducted by Al-Issa (2005), "using past experiences, or familiar ways of doing things, might ordinarily work in an individual's native setting but once people move to other countries past experiences might not be helpful at all and may create cultural conflict. This becomes more complicated when two cultures are forced to interact on a regular basis in an environment that is limited in terms of space and requires constant interaction as in the classroom environment" (p.11) All decisions teachers make about how they organize or manage their classrooms reflect a cultural perspective, and teachers need to

realize that these choices will affect students in different ways (Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008).

Mentors generally know that many beginning teachers struggle with classroom management. This often includes suggestions for clear rules, procedures, routines and consequences. But classroom management involves much more, and in the case of this study specifically, next steps need to factor the BITs' cultural norms, expectations, and values into the equation. If mentors are going to assist a BIT in this high-need, essential core of classroom management, they must understand the BIT's prior experiences and expectations. A BIT may not know the origin of the classroom management problem because the past practices that they were accustomed to, as students and/or teachers in their native country, are no longer applicable or effective. By understanding a BIT's expectations and prior experiences, coupled with a knowledge of the student population the BIT is serving, a clear and effective game plan can be established that involves examining previous practices and modifying them, and finally incorporating new ones that mentors know are successful.

Limitations

Although this study provided a large amount of data collected from 12 BIT interviews, there are limitations to the generalizability of the data. The individualism-collectivism framework itself needs to be used cautiously. As observed by Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, & Greenfield (2000), "Human experience is far too complex to fit neatly into any conceptual scheme. No society is all one thing or another" (p. 4). While Latino and Asian cultures tend to be collectivistic, saying that all individuals from these cultures are necessarily the same, would be a gross overgeneralization. There is always diversity

within a group, as well as other, external influences that move individuals along the cultural continuum.

The primary limitation to this study is the size of the sample. By collecting data from only one district (albeit a very large one), the data are limited to the experiences and perceptions of the 12 BITs from Yangna Unified. Since Yangna Unified is a large, urban school district, there is a great probability that a BIT will find other teachers of their own ethnicity for support. This may not be the case at rural schools, which could create further isolation for the BIT and influence his/her overall perceptions.

BITs' age of immigration to the United States fluctuated between five and 33 years of age, which affected their views. The younger the BIT immigrated to the United States, the more individualistic their views became. As stated in Chapter 2, certain influences such as one's level of education, socio-economic status, and urban environment can have an impact on how one views things through an individualistic or collectivistic lens. Despite this, all BITs still had some semblance of collectivistic norms that affected their decision-making skills and perceptions.

Another potential limitation of the study is that only science and math teachers at the secondary level were included. Responses could differ if the study had been conducted with BITs who teach other content areas or grade levels.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The purpose of this study was to uncover the subtle but powerful impact of culture on the effectiveness of the mentor for BITs. Mentors serve as navigation guides who provide support with the expectation of accelerating new teacher practices and ultimately increase student achievement.

Finding: Mentors who were more cognizant about their BIT's culture and background provided clearer paths for the BIT to take.

The implication of this finding is that mentors need to be proactive and investigate their BIT's culture and how they view things. Educators who work with beginning teachers should be cognizant that the culture of the novice teacher can manifest itself in learning and teaching preferences. However, there are so many different cultures that teachers may come from. In this study alone, there were teachers from Guatemala, Mexico, El Salvador, China, Vietnam, Japan, Costa Rica, and the Philippines. Therefore, the lens of individualism and collectivism can be especially helpful in looking at large patterns of cultural norms (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch & Greenfield, 2000). This should be considered carefully too as the length of time in the United States is a powerful indicator (perhaps even more so than country of origin) of individualistic or collectivistic tendencies. This lens is a handy (but certainly not perfect) way to assist mentors to access a wide range of cultural patterns that might be helpful in their mentorship of BITs.

Finding: Mentor training should include components on culture and examine with depth the conceptual framework of individualism and collectivism.

In addition to mentors learning more about their BIT, more mentor trainings in areas that involve culture should take place. Educators working with beginning teachers should also examine the own assumptions about how their learners will and should respond, keeping an open mind for potentially unexpected responses. Moreover, they must assist the BIT in creating a balance between their two cultures so that they may better adapt to their new learning environment effectively, while still maintaining the norms and values that are important to them. It is also important that mentors know their

schools, district, and community very well. Mentors who understand the culture of the school community and are knowledgeable about how to acquire resources for their BITs are extremely valuable. These qualities are less tied to years of service and more a matter of insight, foresight, circumspection, and conceptualized knowledge (Hutchinson & Jazzar, 2007). Effective mentoring, as the research shows, can significantly improve BITs' cultural adaptation and classroom success.

The researcher believes, on the basis of the data collected, that understanding the principles of collectivism and individualism will be a key factor for lowering the attrition rate of BITs. More BITs will choose to stay in the profession because this larger understanding, presented by their mentors, will allow them to more effectively adapt to their new educational arena by bridging two value systems without necessarily distancing themselves from their culture. This will allow BITs to develop new practices that will produce more effective results in areas ranging from classroom management, parent conferences, collaborating with others in the school arena, and working with their mentors. BITs who build resilience over time overcome obstacles and are more successful at navigating the educational arena.

Culture is generally presented in fragmented pieces that provide features of various ethnicities. Using the framework of individualism and collectivism as a vehicle for finding common ground, can bring about real change in classroom practices. When mentors understand cultural differences, they can accelerate new teacher practice and increase student achievement from the inside out instead of only responding to BITs' external behavior and guessing what might be going on inside their hearts and minds. As the data showed, mentors who are knowledgeable about the culture of the BIT and the

culture of the school can serve as cultural clarifiers for their BIT. Only in this way can mentors and BITs successfully navigate the new cultural arena and become bi-culturally proficient. Mentors can also convey their cultural knowledge with other school personnel which in turn can impact the development of policies that are more culturally congruent for not only the BIT but for many immigrant families that they serve.

Finding: Mentors should get to know about their BITs through a variety of relationship-based connections, with culture as one of many points of interest.

All BITs interviewed mentioned how having mentors that accepted them for who they were and not judging them or making them feel inferior in any way was instrumental in building meaningful relationships. BITs should be given a pre-assessment on their views on issues ranging from how they perceive authority, the role of parents in education, and teacher and student responsibilities. This would provide a mentor with a clearer lens as to how to proceed with building a relationship of trust, and effectively assisting with areas of need.

Organizations that provide mentor trainings should include components that include differentiation for teachers who have immigrated to the United States, especially if they arrived during their teen or later years. Studies show that acculturation takes a longer period of time the later the individual immigrates, which is consistent with this study. Traditional supports are not necessarily the most appropriate support for BITs. BITs need assistance with cultural and social adjustments, which impact pedagogical practices and ultimately affect student success. Providing training for future mentors on the principles of individualism and collectivism is crucial because mentors are many times the cultural brokers between the school and the beginning teacher, and they help

the BIT find a comfortable balance. Those mentors who have extensive training should be used when school districts assign mentors to BITs.

Finding: BITs going through induction programs may need different supports than traditional beginning teachers.

Evidence of induction requires that mentors accumulate certain forms of evidence that demonstrates that the beginning teacher has shown competency in specific pedagogical skills for subject matter instruction beyond what was demonstrated for the preliminary credential. Beginning teachers going through induction also must also demonstrate that they support all students by designing and implementing equitable and inclusive learning environments. While these two standards are important for all teachers to achieve, mentors should also assist and provide evidence that teachers, especially BITs, have acculturated to the norms and expectations of the school arena. This requires that each mentor gets to know his or her BIT first before initiating the mentoring process. This may also involve utilizing different strategies and tools than what is required of the native born teacher going through induction. Furthermore, mentors need to ensure that all of their beginning teachers have an academic roadmap for their content and that steps are taken to ensure that benchmarks are met. But for a BIT, creating a roadmap may be a new and confusing experience in and of itself. A mentor cannot accelerate new teacher practices and thus increase student learning if an academic game plan has not been established. Effective teacher decision-making influences not only teacher practices in the classroom and student achievement but also impacts whether a teacher will remain in the profession or not. The findings from this study have implications for developing

mentoring supports, taking into consideration the views of mentors and beginning teachers.

Finding: Districts must keep data on the attrition rate of BITs.

All districts need to engage in continuous evaluation of their mentoring programs and provide the most effective support for all of their teachers. Keeping current data on teacher attrition disaggregated by important facts such as whether or not the beginning teacher was assigned a mentor, participated in induction, what supports in and out of school were provided, and if the beginning teacher was native born or born in another country. Only then can next steps be taken so as to differentiate the mentoring process so as to ensure that each individual teacher receives what he or she needs in order to accelerate his/her practice and increase student learning.

Finding: Administrators and other support personnel impact BITs and are instrumental in assisting BITs by providing in-house supports.

The data showed that providing support for in-house school personnel could positively impact BIT acculturation and effectiveness. Administrators must be trained on what these supports may look like when assisting BITs and provide initial orientations not just on logistics and paperwork but also on teacher responsibilities, including curriculum development, classroom management, and the role of the parent. School districts should also have trained professionals in these areas of acculturation and provide valuable orientations when school sites cannot provide one. No BIT should be left to sink or swim. As Miki stated,

> …they should give you the clear policy, what you should do, what you shouldn't do, what they expect you to do every day. Have a clear framework where

boundaries of your responsibilities, your duties, and what the school policies over teaching, over the immigrant, over the parents, over the language. They should set up that clearly before teacher went to the school for the first day.

In addition, providing collaborative grade level or content area support is vital for the BIT teacher so that he or she is not working in isolation. In addition to sharing and learning new and effective strategies, this collaboration among a wider circle of fellow educators allows for a higher level of cultural awareness to emerge, which is beneficial for all. Goddard, Goddard, and Tschannen-Moran (2007) found in their study that there is a positive relationship between teacher collaboration and differences among schools in mathematics and reading achievement. This has important implications for all teachers but especially for BITs coming from cultures that emphasize working collaboratively to benefit the whole group.

Several BITs mentioned that the availability of a Professional Learning Community (PLC), and a Small Learning Community (SLC) provided much needed collaboration, assistance and served as small collaborative families. Administrators should strengthen the role of the PLCs and SLCs in order to instill effective collaboration and communication. Administrators could also pair the BIT with another teacher of the same culture for additional support.

Recommendations for Future Research

According to Hungarian researcher, Szent-Gyorgyi (n.d.), "Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought" (retrieved from http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/albertszen389956.html). This statement holds a powerful meaning for me as my formal study ends. Society has seen,

experienced and discussed plights regarding teacher ineffectiveness, teacher attrition and low student learning for decades. This study has addressed these serious national conditions through the lens of BITs. We know that many BITs go down as mere statistics in an ever-growing trend of teacher burnout. The data from this study clearly give us a clearer answer to ***why*** this attrition takes place and provides a ***how*** to prevent BIT attrition through mentor support so that improvements can be made. The study may have been limited to only secondary teachers, who teach science and math in an urban setting and are from Asia or Latin America, but it is a powerful first step in beginning the conversation for all BITs, regardless of their place of origin or grade level. Only through dialogue can we, as a society, better support one another. That being the case, there are many avenues for future research that were uncovered over the course of the study.

As stated above, this study used BITs from Asia and Latin America. Future researchers could examine BITs from other geographic locations such as Africa and Europe to see how these BITs acculturate to the norms and values of schools in the United States so that the data obtained can become research-based knowledge for educators and policy makers to examine. In addition to researching other cultures, a wider variety of grade levels and subject matter could be examined so that the findings shed light on what specific forms of mentor and school support these BITs are in need of.

The practice of having all beginning teachers go through the same district-sponsored induction program could be reexamined. The objective of the induction program standards where this study was conducted states,

> "The induction program incorporates a purposeful, logically sequenced structure of extended preparation and professional development that prepares participating

> teachers to meet the academic learning needs of all P-12 students and retain high quality teachers. The design is responsive to individual teacher's needs, and is consistent with Education Code. It is relevant to the contemporary conditions of teaching and learning and provides for coordination of the administrative components of the program such as admission, advisement, participant support and assessment, support provider preparation, and program evaluation." (CTC, 2008, p.6)

As this study showed, preparing a BIT teacher to achieve the goals stated above can look different than those aimed at a native-born beginning teacher. The goal of meeting the needs of all students is the same but the game plan could be dramatically different. The language also states that the design "is responsive to individual teacher's needs…" (CTC, 2008, p.6), but does not give any reference of what these needs may entail. Educators may interpret these needs differently. State policy makers can look again at the language of induction and make the necessary modifications and/or recommendations so as to ensure that all readers are aware of the diversity of needs of all beginning teachers in the state.

Future researchers can follow the BITs studied longitudinally to find out how they are faring and how many are still in the profession a few years from now. This can include what real-life supports or obstacles they are facing and ultimately link back to what we already know about teacher burnout. BITs could write their narratives, which could be compiled into a book that could be used for beginning teacher training. Such a step would foster the two-way learning that needs to occur between BITs and their mentors and other school personnel.

Future researchers could also determine if the training based on the principles of individualism/collectivism made an impact through the administration of the training, and assess those results through pre and post-tests. These tests could include real-life scenarios involving cultural clashes. Questions would be posed asking the participant how s/he would attempt to best handle the situation.

As previously stated, one of the limitations of this study is that the study was conducted in one large, urban district. Despite the fact that Yangna Unified has a very diverse student and teacher population, it is still located in a dense urban setting. Future research can include conducting similar studies in other settings in order to shed light on the ways all BITs are supported. In addition, all BITs worked in high-poverty and lower achieving schools. Further research could be conducted in more stable and/or higher socio-economic schools to see what challenges and supports are encountered by the BIT. With the increase in the number of projected BITs, placement will increase at both urban and rural districts, which gives more value to this recommendation.

BITs had varying degrees of English proficiency, as well as accent intrusion into their speech, depending on their country of origin and time in the United States. Surprisingly, not one BIT mentioned that being an English language learner (ELL) could be a barrier for some students, students' parents, resource personnel, and mentor in regards to comprehension. Being an ELL may hinder understanding in addition to the BITs' cultural differences. Parents may also believe that students are not performing well academically due to the BITs' language skills. If the teacher has problems with the idiosyncrasies of English, other problems are compounded. Further research could include the role of English accents; mastery of English syntax, vocabulary, and norms of communication;

and proficiency with student achievement.

In reviewing the literature, the principal's role is often not addressed when analyzing the success of beginning teachers going through induction. Mentoring literature typically focuses more on the visible measures of classroom effectiveness such as classroom management, student assessment, and delivery of content rather than on reflection as a means of growth. A qualitative study by Tillman (2005) focused on the relationships between the new teacher, the principal, and the mentor. Data were collected using reflective journals and interviews. Beginning teachers who were interviewed indicated a clear absence of principal participation during their first year. Several of the BITs interviewed in this study validated this finding. Future studies following principals who play a proactive role in the mentoring of their BITs should be examined. Tillman (2005) suggests that principals should play a proactive role in mentoring beginning teachers. An additional suggestion by Tillman (2005) is that "principals can accomplish a more proactive role by assisting new teachers with the transition into school culture through guidance, support, and careful planning" (p. 613). He further states that principals can also be influential in a beginning teacher's growth by promoting new relationships with colleagues, which can contribute greatly to the acculturation process. Tillman (2005) adds that principals need to understand that mentoring will assist teachers in thinking and reflecting more critically about their experiences, which will enable them to grow professionally. Even though mentors are supporting the beginning teacher on a weekly basis, the administrator is responsible for the entire school arena, which includes grade or content level meetings, and the assignments of students. Furthermore, she/he is instrumental in establishing the culture of the school; the keystone that holds up every

individual school. Creating and sustaining systems that will help new teachers find support, in a variety of ways, is important despite the tremendous responsibilities administrators already take on. A further study could examine this role.

Conclusion

This qualitative study set out to explore the role culture had on the BIT/mentor relationship. As viewed through the lens of collectivism and individualism, culture proved to play a pivotal role in the BIT/mentor relationships. Culture can influence how one perceives certain situations. This study demonstrated how BITs' collectivistic home culture can often be in opposition with the new individualistic school culture. If a mentor's main charge is to accelerate new teacher practices and ultimately increase student achievement, then mentors must assist their BITs in navigating the school arena effectively overcoming any opposing barriers. To successfully serve as a guide, the mentor must understand the BITs' cultural norms and values in order to plan a successful path for them to take, built on a relationship of trust. But as the data demonstrated, this relationship goes both ways and can be instructive to both the BIT and the mentor. Like relationships themselves, which are constantly evolving, so too are cultural values and beliefs. Shifting awareness and new experiences on both the part of the mentor and the BITs are important to each party's cultural knowledge.

Five themes emerged from the findings: cultural adaptations, the role of the teacher, the role of the mentor, the role of the parent, and nuances of cultural influences. Recommendations included training all mentors and mentor trainers to better understand the culture of BITs in order to ease their transitions into their new environments more smoothly. Ultimately, using a two-part framework of collectivism and individualism can

be helpful in consolidating a lot of cultural information as a short-hand (culture cannot be reduced to a simple system, nor should we make such an attempt). This study proved that establishing a trusting relationship is essential for mentors working with all beginning teachers. But for mentors working with BITs, this trust is further complicated because the goals and the perceived roads that lead to these important relationships may be inherently different. Through strong trusting relationships, a mentor and BIT can come together to solve problems and bridge cultures in order to understand how best to forge ahead. As a current mentor, who has worked with beginning teachers from a variety of backgrounds for several years, I can attest that this relationship of trust is crucial for growth to take place. I know I cannot build this relationship if I do not truly understand my beginning teacher. The conceptual framework of individualism and collectivism has assisted me with better understanding those cultural nuances that arise. When mentors have models for understanding cultural differences, they can accelerate new teacher practices and increase student achievement from the inside out. This method is more effective than simply responding to a BITs' external behavior and guessing what might be the cause. Seeing what might be going on inside a BIT's heart and mind will enlighten a path for a mentor to successfully lead a beginning teacher to, benefitting all who walk with them.

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Appendix A: Research Invitation

Dear Teacher,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a dissertation study that I am conducting as a doctoral candidate at California State University, Northridge. My study explores how culture plays a role in the mentor-beginning teacher relationship.

As part of the study, I am conducting confidential, private interviews with beginning teachers who are enrolled in the Beginning Teacher Growth & Development's Induction (BTGDI) program in order to gain a better understanding of culture's affect in the mentor-beginning teacher relationship. Each interview should be approximately 45-60 minutes long. Responses used in the dissertation will be confidential, and your name will not appear in the study. Participants will receive a $35 gift card for their time.

If you would like to participate, please contact me at giancarlo.mercado@lausd.net and/or 310 562-9314. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

Your time investment in this study is greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for considering participation in this study.

Best,

Giancarlo Mercado
CSUN Doctoral Student

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Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

California State University, Northridge
CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Culture and Mentoring

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Culture and Mentoring is a study conducted by Giancarlo Mercado as part of the requirements for the Ed.D. degree in Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding if you want to participate. A researcher listed below will be available to answer your questions.

RESEARCH TEAM
Researcher:
Giancarlo Mercado
Department of Education
18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330
310 562-9314
Giancarlo.mercado.704@my.csun.edu

Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Jody Dunlap
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department
18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330
818 677-3078
jody.dunlap@csun.edu

PURPOSE OF STUDY
The purpose of this research study is to understand how culture plays a role in the beginning immigrant teacher/mentor relationship.

SUBJECTS
Inclusion Requirements
You are eligible to participate in this study if you are a beginning teacher who has immigrated to the United States from Asia of Latin America, teach math or science at the secondary level, and has enrolled in LAUSD's Beginning Teacher Growth and Development Induction (BTGDI) program.

Exclusion Requirements
You are not eligible to participate in this study if you were born in the United States and/or are not enrolled in LAUSD's BTGDI program.

Time Commitment
This study will involve approximately 45 minutes to one hour of your time. An email or phone call follow-up may be necessary if clarifications are needed.

PROCEDURES
You will be interviewed after school hours at a location off campus that is convenient for you. Question will pertain to your experiences with the mentoring process and at your school setting. A follow-up session, email, and/or phone call may be necessary.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with the procedures described in this study include: boredom, mild emotional discomfort, and embarrassment. This study involves no more than minimal risk. There are no known harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life. You may skip any question and discontinue participation at any time.

BENEFITS
Subject Benefits
The possible benefits you may experience from the procedures described in this study include gaining more insight about the mentoring process.

Benefits to Others or Society
The benefits to others include a greater awareness of how culture plays a role in the beginning immigrant teacher/mentor relationship.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION
The only alternative to participation in this study is not to participate.

COMPENSATION, COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT
Compensation for Participation
You will receive a $35 gift card to Target or Starbucks.

Costs
There is no cost to you for participation in this study.

WITHDRAWAL OR TERMINATION FROM THE STUDY AND CONSEQUENCES
You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. If you decide to withdraw from this study you should notify Giancarlo Mercado immediately.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Subject Identifiable Data
All identifiable information that will be collected about you will be kept with the research data. Your real name as well as school's name will be substituted with pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

Data Storage
All research data will be stored on a laptop computer that is password protected. In addition, research data, including transcripts and recordings, will be stored electronically on a secure cloud-based network that is password protected.

Data Access
The researcher and faculty advisor named on the first page of this form will have access to your study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies you will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without your separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about you. LAUSD will not have access to the data.

Data Retention
The researchers intend to keep the research data in a repository for 10 years and then deleted. Although data will not be shared, findings will be amalgamated to influence how mentors will be trained and for future research.

Mandated Reporting
Under California law, the researcher, as a state mandated reporter, is required to report known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse or neglect of a child, dependent adult or elder, including, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse or neglect. If any researcher has or is given such information, he may be required to report it to the authorities.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS
If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research please contact the research team listed on the first page of this form.

If you have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Research and Sponsored Projects, 18111 Nordhoff Street, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330-8232, or phone 818-677-2901.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT
You should not sign this form unless you have read it and been given a copy of it to keep. **Participation in this study is voluntary.** You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. Your decision will not affect your relationship with California State University, Northridge. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this consent form and have had a chance to ask any questions that you have about the study.

___I agree to participate in the study.

___ I agree to be audio recoded.

___ I do not wish to be audio recorded

Participant Signature	Date
Printed Name of Participant	
Researcher Signature	Date
Printed Name of Researcher	

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

I. Pre-interview Session: Introduction/Background

Welcome and introduction:

Good morning/afternoon/evening.
Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. Before we begin the interview session, I'd like to give you the opportunity to read and sign the Consent to Participate in Research.

Purpose of the interview:

As we discussed, this interview is a one-on-one interview intended to collect information for a research study that explores how culture affects the mentor-beginning teacher relationship. During this interview, we will talk about your experiences and attitudes during your mentoring experiences.

Confidentiality:

Any information you share with me today will be used for research purposes only. I will be aggregating results from all interviews but I will use pseudonyms when identifying individuals or attributing comments to any particular person. Personally identifiable characteristics, such as your name and school, will not be used to identify you in any report or document. Today's interview session will be audio-recorded. I will also be taking notes of the conversation. The audio recordings may be transcribed for analysis. The audio recorded file, transcribed file, and notes will be stored securely in a password-protected laptop of the principle investigator until completion of interview analysis. Upon completion of analysis, files and notes will be stored away so that other researchers may access them in the future. Only the researchers identified in the Consent to Participate will have access to the files and notes. The files and notes will be accessed and analyzed in strict confidentiality. Finally your name or personally identifying information will not be used in any published or public reports.

Informed consent:

This consent notice summarizes some information from the Consent to Participate in Research and communicates the procedures, potential risks and discomforts for participants, potential benefits to participants, payment to participants for participation, participation and withdrawal, and rights of research participants. Procedures in this interview are limited to semi-structured personal interview sessions. Because the study deals with issues that are sensitive, some interview questions may involve issues of a personal nature. You may feel uneasy about answering some of these interview questions. You may elect not to answer any of the questions with which you feel uneasy and still remain as a participant in the study. You may not benefit personally from your

participation in this study. However, findings from this study may provide insights into the mentoring process and may contribute to our knowledge on the subject.
Interview participants will be compensated with a gift card for their participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You are not obligated whatsoever to answer or respond to any question or to discuss anything that you are not inclined to answer or discuss. You can skip any question, or any part of any question, and will not face any penalty for answering, or not answering, any question in any way. You may ask that the audio recording be stopped at any time and/or may leave the interview at any time for any reason without consequences of any kind. You may withdraw consent at any time and discontinue participation without interview. You can halt your participation in the interview at any time. You are not waiving legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this interview.

Identification and contact information of principal investigator:

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant the details of this study, or any other concerns please contact Giancarlo Mercado at his mailing address: 2549 Veteran Ave. Los Angeles, CA. 90064. Alternatively, you may contact Giancarlo Mercado via telephone at 310 562-9314 or via email at giancarlo.mercado.704@my.csun.edu.
Timing: Today's interview will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Are there any questions before I get started?

II. Interview Session

Participants will be asked these background questions.

A. Where were you born?
B. Did you grow up in a big city or rural environment?
C. Where did you go to school?
D. Do you have brothers and sisters? Can you tell me anything about their schooling and the schooling of your parents?
E. What do you teach?
F. How old are you?
G. How old were you when you immigrated here?

1. What has been most helpful to you as a beginning teacher?
2. Who has helped you?
3. What obstacles have you encountered and how have you tried to make sense of them? For instance, what support would you have received in your native country that you are not receiving here?
4. Describe your experiences with your mentor. For example, what is a typical session?
    a. How do you communicate? How does your mentor make communication easier or more difficult?

    b. Do you sense that your mentor may be expecting you to act differently that what might be natural or comfortable for you? Did you have to adapt?
    c. Do you know each other's family?
5. To what extent are you comfortable asking your mentor questions or disagree with him or her? Why do you think this is the case?
6. Describe the best way to develop an effective relationship with your mentor. In other words, what should your mentor do, step-by-step to support your development as a teacher?
7. What are the most important things that you hope to gain from your mentor? Why are these important to you?
8. In what ways do you think your cultural background and your mentor's cultural background influence your relationship with your mentor? Do you sometimes see things through different lenses since you are from different backgrounds?
9. Please provide specific examples in terms of how you perceive:
    - The role of the parent in education
    - Showing respect/manners
    - Expectations/responsibilities of students
    - Value of education
    - Role of the teacher
    - Role of Authority
10. Beginning teachers have so many skills to learn. For example, they have to know what is expected of students in the content areas, they have to understand classroom management strategies, they should be competent with a variety of theories about developing, learning, instruction and motivation. Given there are so many things to learn, how would you rant the most important ones?

Closing Questions:

I would like to give you a final opportunity to help us examine these issues. Before I end today, is there anything that I missed? Do you have anything else to add at this time? Have you said everything that you wanted to say but didn't get a chance to say? Have you shared everything that is significant about these experiences with me? If there's anything else that you recall after our interview session, I invite you to share it by contacting me.

III. Post

Interview Session: Debriefing and Closing

Thank you for participating in today's interview session.
I greatly appreciate you taking the time and sharing your ideas with me.
I also want to restate that what you have shared with me is confidential.
No part of our discussion that includes names or other identifiable characteristics will be used in any report or document. Finally, I want to provide you with a chance to ask any questions that you might have about this interview. Do you have any questions at this time? Again, here is my contact information in case you think of new ideas that emerged after the interview and/or if you have any additional questions.