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Mentor Teaching in Four Communities of Catholic Sisters in the Mid-Twentieth Century (1940-1965)

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Abstract

This dissertation is a qualitative study that explores mentoring experiences of Catholic teaching nuns– hereafter called sisters and/or women religious– who served in parochial schools in the mid-twentieth century in the Diocese of Syracuse, NY. Teaching sisters comprised the majority of the professional workforce in Catholic schools through ministry as classroom teachers, building principals, diocesan-level administrators, service providers, and more. The purpose of this qualitative study was to develop an understanding of how teaching sisters engaged in mentoring to develop instructional and pedagogical skills in the mid-twentieth century, specifically 1940 through 1965.

In addition to researching archival records, this study employs a phenomenological approach and uses oral history methods, enabling sisters to share their experiences in focus groups and oral history interviews. Interview data were recorded, transcribed and analyzed. This study asks the following research questions: 1) What do teaching sisters' oral histories reveal about their development of teaching skills?; 2) What do teaching sisters' oral histories reveal about how formal and informal networks supported their development of these skills?; 3) What do teaching sisters reveal about how support evolved over time?; 4) What do teaching sisters' oral histories reveal about the roles formal and informal networks played in their development as teachers?; 5) Did their support for each others' teaching change over time?

The findings suggest that during the first half of the period studied, mentoring was a critical practice that sisters depended upon to develop skills in pedagogical practices, including lesson planning, instructional delivery, student assessment, and daily operations. In the second half of the time period under consideration mentoring practices continued; however, sisters began providing support to help them cope with substantial changes occurring in religious life.

Sisters have shared empathy and symbiotic penchants to provide emotional and compassionate support to cultivate congregational and professional success. This research provides individual and congregational experiences that illuminate how mentoring was used as a form of occupational support. First-person narratives, based on the lived experiences of teaching sisters, further add to the existing literature on the history of women religious.

MENTOR TEACHING IN FOUR COMMUNITIES OF CATHOLIC SISTERS IN THE MID-
TWENTIETH CENTURY (1940-1965)

by

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Definitions of Terms

Sister, Nun, Women Religious - Terms used interchangeably: "A religious sister is a member of a religious order or congregation who is devoted to the service of God" (Salazar, 1971, p.18).

Postulant - A preliminary stage to the novitiate existing from the institution of monasticism. Postulant. (n.d.). Retrieved August 03, 2018, from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12319b.htm

Novice - The canonical Latin name of those who, having been regularly admitted into a religious order and ordinarily already confirmed in their higher vocation by a certain period of probation as postulants, are prepared by a series of exercises and tests for the religious profession. (n.d.). Retrieved August 03, 2018, from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11144a.htm

Aspirant - Adolescent women who lived in dormitories, often situated near convents. Attended boarding school/academies administered by religious congregations. When of age, became postulants in communities. A. (n.d.). Retrieved August 03, 2018, from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/a.htm

Sister Formation - Program of studies and activities adopted by a religious community through which it endeavors to form its members integrally and completely from every point of view – human, religious and apostolic (McDermott, 1965, p. 233).

Sister Formation Conference - "Established in 1954, the Sister Formation Conference was an organized entity of the National Catholic Educational Association, College and University Department. It served spiritual, intellectual and professional training and their fitting integration in pre-service and in-service programs" (Eby, 2000 & Kennelly, 2009).

Vatican II – 21st ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church (1962–65), announced by Pope John XXIII on Jan. 25, 1959, as a means of spiritual renewal for the church and as an occasion for Christians separated from Rome to join in search for reunion. Britannica, T. (2014, December 16). Second Vatican Council. Retrieved August 03, 2018, from https://www.britannica.com/event/Second-Vatican-Council

Obedience – The complying with a command or precept. (n.d.). Retrieved August 03, 2018, from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11181c.htm

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study draws from teaching sisters' oral histories to develop an understanding of how they used mentoring to develop instructional and pedagogical skills in the Diocese of Syracuse, NY in the mid-twentieth century (1940-1965). To report the findings, I consider how mentoring functioned and evolved within, and among, congregations in two phases. The Sister Formation Conference (SFC) was formally established "at the Executive Committee meeting of the College and University Department of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), held in Chicago on April 21, 1954 (Bulletin, 1954, p. 1). Therefore, I explore how communities engaged in mentoring support prior to the establishment of the SFC and after its inception. There is a distinction to be made between the SFC, the formal conference established under the NCEA, and the Sister Formation Movement (SFM). The SFM refers to activities that began before the SFC was formally established, many of which continued after the SFC was created.

Sisters were asked to provide personal accounts on how they learned to teach, including their perspectives on how they helped each other and how this help was situated within, and among, congregations. A qualitative methodology is used, consisting of a combination of oral history interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. This study documents how sisters developed internal networks of support that fostered the development of close emotional relationships between mentors and protégés.

Statement of the Problem

An influx of poor, largely uneducated Catholic immigrants to the United States along with the rise of the public education system in the nineteenth century actually gave rise to this

problem a century prior to the time period under examination. Catholic bishops convening at the Third Plenary Council in Baltimore in 1884, concerned about the need to preserve language, culture and faith required all parishes "erect a school near each church, if one did not already exist, within two years" (Bryk, Lee and Holland, 1993, p. 25). In addition, all Catholic parents were required to send their children to these parochial schools thus necessitating the demand for vast qualities of teaching sisters (Bryk, Lee & Holland, 1993; McGuinness, 2013).

Catholic education incurred expansion and growth in the mid-twentieth century primarily due to influences such as the post-World War II baby boom and relative population expansion. This again led to increased demand for large numbers of teachers in Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Margaret McGuinness writes, "between 1950 and 1960 Catholic elementary schools increased 171 percent and secondary schools grew 174 percent" (McGuinness, 2013 p. 84). As most scholars of parochial education agree, "The majority of Catholic school teachers in the United States has been women. For decades women religious staffed the major portion of Catholic elementary and secondary schools" (Keating and Traviss, 2001, p. xviii). They ministered as classroom teachers, building principals, diocesan-level administrators, service providers, and more. Bryk, Lee & Holland write, "The Catholic school system that had enrolled 405,000, students in 1880 had grown to 2.5 million students and almost 10,000 schools by 1930. By 1950, there were 11,000 schools and 3.1 million students" (1993, p. 32). According to a special report "Population Trends Among Religious Institutes of Women" published by the Georgetown University Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), there were 147,310 women religious in the United States in 1950 and 181,421 in 1966 (Berrelleza, Gautier & Gray, 2014, p. 2). As the number of schools grew, so too did the need for more teaching sisters. In an effort to meet the practical staffing needs of schools, there was incredible pressure

to push young women into schools with little or no professional teacher training. Although some sisters were enrolling in college, the courses were predominantly liberal arts studies such as literature, philosophy, and theology, etc. Some women who entered congregational life, especially in the early stages of the time period of this study, did not receive any formal teacher training in methods or pedagogy. The training of sisters I studied is described in greater detail in the following section.

Religious congregations in my study all had training periods, including the postulancy and the novitiate. The postulancy, or initial probationary training period, typically lasted from six months to one year. After the postulancy, women entered the novitiate, which lasted one to two years. Salazar states, "The first-year novitiate must be considered the canonical year. This year is wholly and integrally devoted to the spiritual development of the novice for the religious-apostolic life" (Salazar, 1971, p. 52). *Habits of Change: An Oral History of American Nuns*, by Carole Garibaldi Rogers is a compilation of 94 oral history participant interviews of women conducted between 1991-1995. Rogers' participants include women who remained in religious life as well as those who made the decision to leave religious life (Rogers, 1996). A participant in Rogers' study described the postulancy as follow: "We did everything together: prayed together, worked together, studied together. I'll be honest. I was very happy. I felt where I belonged," (Rogers, 1996, p. 50). Unfortunately, adherences to these formation[1] criteria were sometimes impacted by the high demand for teachers in schools. Schneider stated, "Faced with the demand for teachers, this critical time of formation was often compromised by teacher

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[1] The concept of formation is traditionally associated with spiritual development; however, my participants frequently used the term formation when referencing or describing their professional training related to the teaching apostolate. Therefore, unless otherwise noted, formation refers to the professional preparation and training of teaching sisters.

education courses and other professional training or by the postulant or novice being sent out to teach with as little as six months preparedness" (Schneider, 1988, p. 57).

The problem of lacking professional skills is also noted by the Felician Franciscans in *Journey in Faith*, which states, "One in every five sisters in the classroom was not only a neophyte but also very young, inexperienced and undereducated for the position [of teacher]" (Kuznicki, 1996, p. 149). In response, congregations sought to devise methods to support their teaching ministries; they faced obstacles in doing so, however.

As teaching professionals, sisters had to comply with restrictive rules that prohibited active communication with sister colleagues. This was a burden for sisters who needed professional support and/or advice. This constrained how sisters could help one another prepare for their roles in schools. For example, many teaching congregations had provisions written into their constitutions defining when speaking was permitted and prohibited. In "The Official IHM Stance on Friendship, 1845-1960," which is written about the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Monroe, MI, Glisky, writes[2]:

> Although solitude and silence are traditionally recognized as essential in the pursuit of reflective and prayerful life, the IHM Constitutions interpreted silence to be an all-encompassing feature of community life, an ironic requirement for women whose profession was teaching. Over two-thirds of the sisters' days were marked as "silence days," where conversation with one another was allowed only at recreation times" (1997, p. 158).

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[2] *Building sisterhood: A feminist history of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, Monroe Michigan, in which Joan Glisky's chapter (and several others cited in this dissertation), "The official IHM stance on friendship, 1845-1960, is written about the Monroe, Michigan IHM Community. The Monroe, MI, IHM community is separate from and the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scranton, PA, who are included in my study.

Glisky further notes that speaking was prohibited after school and in the evenings. For the IHMs, evenings and early mornings were reserved for solemn silence. During these hours, speaking was prohibited in all cases except emergency (Glisky 1997).

This dissertation explores how sisters relied on one another, and/or on internal networks of support, to foster the development of teaching skills. There is a need within the literature to explore this topic using qualitative methods– including individual perspectives and personal experiences– that will tell us what sisters did and how they did it. The narrative accounts of teaching sisters are essential, because "we know very little about the personal experiences of these women – while nuns themselves tend not to publish accounts of their own lives" (McKenna, 2003, p. 66). Therefore, gathering insights from these women is critical while the opportunity still exists.

The literature review for this project indicates that while there is extensive research on mentoring of teachers in public education, there is little research to help scholars understand mentoring in teaching congregations. None of the existing research helps researchers understand how mentoring was different in settings where new teachers lack a foundation and have little or no prior educational training on which to build. Understanding the systems teaching sisters developed, and their means of implementation, augments existing historical literature on teaching sisters generally, while being particularly relevant to their experiences with mentoring. Additionally, research on sisters expands our understanding of networks of professional support, given the confines of religious life.

Research Questions

This study explores the oral histories of teaching sisters in four congregations in the Diocese of Syracuse, NY to understand how they learned to teach, including intra- and inter-

congregational supports that enhanced teaching skills over a nearly 30-year period. This study asks the following research questions: 1) What do teaching sisters' oral histories reveal about their development of teaching skills? 2) What do teaching sisters' oral histories reveal about how formal and informal networks supported their development of these skills? 3) What do teaching sisters' oral histories reveal about how support evolved over time?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous chapter introduced the rationale for this project along with pertinent research questions. This chapter provides an overview of two bodies of literature that inform this study. The first draws from the field of mentoring in education and the second is comprised of the literature on sister formation. The literature most closely aligned with the methods the teaching sisters developed and employed is rooted in the literature on mentoring. Reviews of this literature helped frame the aforementioned research questions relative to how teaching sisters developed various teaching skills and how they supported each others development.

Mentoring Overview

Research on mentoring initially emerged in the mid-twentieth century, with theories generated in the fields of psychology and educational psychology. Erik Erikson is noted for coining the term "generativity," which suggests that midlife professionals reinvent themselves in the workplace through the transference and sharing of occupational wisdom with newer, less developed professionals (Erikson, 1963). Generativity is applied to mid-career professionals who become disheartened as they enter middle age and realize that their career aspirations have plateaued. These professionals, in an attempt to redefine themselves occupationally, work to engage and educate protégées. In "Phases of the Mentor Relationship," Kram states, "Entering a developmental relationship with a young adult provides an opportunity at midlife to redirect one's energies into creative and productive action that can be responsive to salient concerns" (Kram, 1983, p. 609). When applied, Erikson's theory of generativity suggests that engaging in a mentoring relationship with a protégé provides the elder employee meaningful professional opportunities and personal reward. Further, Healy and Welchert argue that the wisdom and knowledge that is transferred becomes the mentors' "professional legacy – a manifestation of

generativity" (Healy & Welchert, 1990, p. 18). Similarly, new employees, or protégés, benefit from mentor feedback and support as they become acclimated to the organization.

Psychological theories such as Lev Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) further suggest that knowledge is developed over time and progresses when the learner is under the direction or tutelage of another more experienced person (Vygotsky, 1978). As defined by Murphy, Scantlebury and Milne, "The simplistic definition of the ZPD, seen in many textbooks and teaching guides, is of a gap between the learning a student can achieve unaided, compared with the learning attained with teacher assistance" (2015, p. 284). When applied to mentoring, this suggests that the professional growth of the protégé develops based on the interaction, collaboration, and support provided by the mentor. More specifically, "The benefits to the protégé can be broken into two categories, including instrumental or career functions and psychosocial support" (Kram, 1985 in Eby, 1997).

Instrumental or career functions include task-oriented skills that relate to job performance and function. As the protégé experiences professional gains under the guidance of the mentor, the mentor experiences a sense of empowerment. The mentor then continues to challenge the protégé with increasingly complex assignments and tasks (Kram, 1985; Lankau & Scandura, 2008). This process increases the protégé's professional growth and is socio-emotionally rewarding for the mentor.

Given these aforementioned outcomes, mentoring relationships can be mutually beneficial. Psychosocial support includes functions that facilitate the development of interpersonal relationships between the mentor and protégé (Kram, 1985; Eby, 1997; Lankau & Scandura, 2008). The psychosocial aspects of mentoring may lead to intimate relationships that include high levels of trust; therefore, further proving to be valuable for both mentor and protégé.

(Siegel, 2000). For protégés in particular, this "increases their sense of competence, effectiveness, and self-worth" (Lankau & Scandura 2008, p. 2). As the protégé watches and learns, he/she models the actions and behaviors of the mentor, thereby developing a similar professional identity (Kram, 1985; Lankau & Scandura 2008).

Mentoring is useful for teacher development because it is adaptable and can vary in design and implementation. Daily obstacles such as unexpected assemblies, fire drills, sick children, inclement weather, etc., are cause for swift adjustment. Mentors model how to be flexible and adaptable when these unexpected, yet inevitable, happenings occur. As generativity theory indicates, experienced teachers mentor new entrants in daily operations, and the protégé simultaneously gains procedural knowledge of mentoring practices. These practices can then be called upon later when the protégé becomes the mentor. The significance of learning how to mentor cannot be overlooked because the process may come full circle later in a person's career. The significance of this process is mentioned in the literature and states, "Experienced teachers lend their efforts towards the skill development of new teachers through the processes of mentoring" (McCann, Johannessen & Bickmore, 2009).

Traditional models of mentoring often incorporate a hierarchical system in which a more senior member of an organization offers professional assistance to someone less experienced (Kram, 1985). Often, these hierarchical systems are formal in nature and are designed by agencies or organizations themselves; other models may be less formal and can incorporate models of peer-to-peer support and/or peer coaching. As suggested by the research, the collegiality of co-worker relationships makes them valuable as a source of specialized development. "Peers can directly offer advice and information on how to accomplish goals,

inform each other of potential chances for advancement, and socially reinforce either good or bad work behaviors" (Raabe & Beehr, 2003, p. 276).

The literature states that, "The exchange of information helps the novice learn the ropes of the organization and get the job done" (Kram & Isabella, 1985, p. 125). In generativity, mid-career professionals gain increased "competence and mastery," and they become concerned about the future of the organization (Kram & Isabella, 1985). These individuals seek out opportunities to share their knowledge with newer employees to enhance organizational structures and reinforce their own contributions. Situated in the research, these are known as intrinsic outcomes. Ragins writes, "Mentors use their organizational power to promote the development and advancement of their protégés within and among organizations (Ragins, 1997, p. 493). Research further indicates that mentors experience a sense of intrinsic reward, whereas mentors experience a "sense of satisfaction and fulfillment received from fostering the development of a younger adult" (Ragins, 1997, p. 493). These practices ultimately inform and nurture the next generation of employees.

Teachers utilize a variety of instructional and pedagogical methods to plan, instruct, and assess student learning. As they develop proficiencies in these and other areas, they sometimes partake in professional support systems to enhance and develop their professional skills. In the section that follows, I describe a variety of methods commonly associated with mentoring and teacher development, including demonstration teaching, collaborative co-teaching and peer mentoring.

Demonstration Teaching

Demonstration teaching engages master teachers and new teachers in collaborative planning, research-based instruction, and reflection of student learning. Demonstration lessons are collaborative and intentionally planned. The master teacher and new teacher meet in advance to discuss lesson objectives and implementation. The master teacher then leads lessons while the new teacher observes those lessons, often recording notes and making observations about instruction and student learning. After the lesson, the two meet to discuss strengths, weaknesses, and steps for improvement, etc. The debriefing sessions that occur at the end of this model are essential because teachers reflect critically on lesson planning, instructional delivery, and student learning (Groth, 2011). This is a common and prevalent form of pre-service and teacher development.

Collaborative/Co-Teaching

Collaborative co-teaching is a model of instruction where both the mentor and the new teacher are involved in planning, instruction and assessment of student learning; daily tasks are equally distributed between the mentor and the new teacher. Little states, "In a collaborative classroom, teachers combine their strengths to work together, coach one another, and provide the best possible environment for their students" (Little, 2005, p. 83). The model employs parity, meaning each person engages in dual roles: teacher/learner, expert/novice, giver and receiver of knowledge (Villa, Thousand and Nevin, 2004). In co-teaching models, there is a cooperative process that includes face-to-face interaction, positive interdependence, monitoring and processing of interpersonal skills, and individual accountability. Instruction may take the form of split classes, stations or centers, cooperative groups, or parallel teaching. Strengths of this model include the teachers' ability to draw from their respective strengths in pedagogy, content and

instruction to provide optimal learning experiences for children (Little, 2005). Additionally, teachers employed in a collaborative model develop trust, mutual rapport, and interpersonal skills (Keefe, et al, 2004).

Peer Mentoring

Mentoring models involving two or more professionals working to support one another is known as peer mentoring. McManus and Russell (2008) summarized the literature on peer mentoring relationships and note three types of peer mentoring models: information peer, collegial peer, and special peer. Information peers are collaborative, and share openly concerning work and organizational issues, but share little personal information (McManus & Russell, 2008). The relationship between informational peers is professional and does not extend beyond professional boundaries. Collegial peers are similar to information peers in that professional information is shared. But in collegial relationships, sharing extends beyond professional boundaries. In this model, we see a limited amount of personal sharing as well. These peers may spend time together outside of the workplace, but this interaction is limited. For the most part, collegial peers are work friends. They encourage and support one another at work and may engage in coaching and role-playing as a form of occupational development. These peers are likely to provide constructive and meaningful feedback to one other with the aim of professional growth (McManus & Russell, 2008).

One example of peer mentoring is the "special friend." These peers have a "holistic" approach to their relationship (McManus and Russell, 2008, p. 7). The boundaries of this relationship extend to include the workplace and the home. These peers have a strong personal and professional relationship built on trust and mutual rapport. They challenge one another and offer constructive criticism as necessary. In this model, there is an emphasis on collaboration that

is non-judgmental, and non-evaluative. "The equal status of peers removes the important power dimension evident in other relationships. Individuals who are at the same level can provide both critical and horizontal communications and traditional mentoring" (Siegel, 2000 in Parker, Hall & Kram, 2008, p. 491). Parker, Hall and Kram further write, "We posit peer coaching as a type of helping relationship in which two people of equal status actively participate in a process of helping each other on specific tasks or problems with a mutual desire to be helpful" (2008, p. 499). The equal status of participants enhances and fosters trusting and collaborative relationships. "In the career field it is now recognized that peers can provide emotional and psychological support that facilitates individual learning and career success" (Parker, Hall & Kram, 2008, p. 490).

<div align="center">Sister Formation</div>

The literature on sister formation is significant to addressing my research questions because it provides a context for understanding formation programs before and after the establishment of a formal Sister Formation Conference (SFC) and changes imposed as a result of Vatican II. It is well documented in the literature that the years 1940-1965 involved vast changes in sister formation experiences that were the result of both the Sister Formation Movement (SFM) and Vatican II (Eby, 2000, Schneider, 1988, & Kennelly, 2009). A thorough exploration of the research on sister formation during the years under consideration also provides a chronological framework for understanding formal and informal networks of mentoring and the development of teaching skills. Finally, it provides a rationale for understanding how mentoring changed over time.

The literature on sister formation considers the nature of religious life as a catalyst for mentoring. Young women, educated by nuns, respected them and aspired to be like them. In

Staying in the Fire: A Sisterhood Responds to Vatican II, Phyllis Kittel remarks on this: "Youthful relationships with God, together with the example of sisters they knew as teachers or mentors, led young women to enter the Community of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. Seeing the Precious Blood Sisters' playfulness, joy, generous care for others, and commitment to community, the young women said, 'I can do that'" (Kittell, 2009, p. 59). The significance of this observation is not to be underestimated and the question emerges, "Were established sisters intentional and deliberate in their actions with young women?" *In Nun: A Memoir*, Mary Gilligan Wong, writes that after word spread in her middle school that she had a vocation:

> Nuns who had never even seemed to know I existed now came out of the woodwork to ask me how I was doing and if I were excited, and they offered to answer any questions I might have. They admitted disappointment that I wasn't joining their order but they professed to be happy for me just the same. I would later learn that nuns who were successful in bringing new vocations to the order go in the unwritten Who's Who of that order" (1983, p. 30).

As I will note in later chapters, my findings also suggest sisters intended to positively influence young women, thus awakening them to vocations.

The idea that young women were influenced and/or mentored by nuns is also represented in the following assertion by Keating and Traviss, "Many of the sisters admitted that they had been inspired by sister-teachers under whom they studied in their formative years of adolescence. When playing school, some women recalled putting a towel on their head as a veil (2001, p. 58). This action suggests that some young women, educated in parochial schools, did not separate the role of teacher from that of sister. When they played school, they simultaneously played the role of teaching nun. To them, these roles were synonymous. That young women could not separate

the role of teacher from the role of sister teacher suggests that sisters may have used their positions as teaching religious to foster the desire to enter religious life.

Although Burns' research centers on an earlier period than the work of Keating & Traviss, he writes the following about pioneer children in the American West: "Catholic children, in seeing sisters for the first time, gazed with awe upon them, as though being from some superior world" (Burns, 1912, p. 131). Sisters represented an idealistic image of what it meant to be active in both prayer and service. This incentivized religious life. The idea that some women entered religious life and, more specifically, recalled being drawn to particular congregations, given their desire to emulate teaching nuns, was evidenced throughout Rogers' findings. One of Rogers' participants said, "I met the nuns. I fell in love with them. They were wonderful teachers; they were caring women. I think it was the first time in my life I looked at women as women. They were just good at everything they did. I wanted to be just like them" (1996, p. 6). Additionally, as noted throughout Roger's findings, sisters did not only wish to become nuns; they desired to be effective teachers.

Some religious congregations established aspirancy programs to draw young women to religious life. In her memoir, Wong writes extensively about entering the "Sisters of Blessings" preparatory school, Saint Raphael, as an aspirant. Note, this is a pseudonym for the Indiana Sisters of Providence. She writes, "By entering the prep school I am taking the first step toward a total breaking of the circle: I will die to myself and my worldly past, to my personal history and my private identity. A new being, more holy and pure than the old, will rise up from the ashes, but for now there must first be the death of the old" (Wong, p. 47). Kittel also writes about aspirancies, stating, "In 1950, in a concerted effort to attract more recruits to the work of the Community, Mother Nathalia Smith built a new wing onto the Motherhouse to serve as a

residential high school for girls who had not begun (or completed high school). In this way, the Community would encourage eighth grade graduates to aspire to religious life" (Kittell, p. 63). Kittell equates the growth and success of the aspirancy with congregational growth in the mid-twentieth century. Roger's participants also mention aspirancies with one participant stating, "the School Sisters of Notre Dame had an aspiranture which accepted high school students. That was more similar to a boarding school than it was to a convent, except that we were separate from the other day students who were not intending to be nuns" (Rogers, 1996, p. 230). At the time of entrance, aspirants were often girls in early adolescence, as young as 11 or 12 years of age. In exchange for the completion of daily chores commonly associated with convent life, aspirants received reduced tuition, room, and board.

In congregations, older and more experienced teaching sisters offered support, encouragement, and comprehensive strategies in methods, curriculum, instruction, and daily operations (McDermott, 1965). The ways sisters offered support varied across congregations and according to individual personalities. "Mentoring was not a formalized system of teacher preparation; rather, the leaders and senior members of these religious institutes communicated core values and ways of doing things to their new members. This formation in turn shaped individuals, their schools and their communities as institutions" (Keating & Traviss, 2001 p. 17).

In *The Adjustment of Teacher Training to Modern Educational Needs: A Comparative Study of the Professional Preparation of Teachers in the Public and Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the United States, with a Proposed Plan for the Training of Teachers for American Catholic Schools*, Schmitz suggested that assumptions were made linking the level of education acquired and degrees held to teacher effectiveness (Schmitz, 1927). Although Schmitz's work refers to an earlier time period than that under consideration, his findings

suggest that the level of education and, more specifically, courses taken in higher education, were not directly related to effectiveness pedagogy or instruction. As such, the training received likely did not directly correlate with professional performance. Schmitz also cited concerns pertaining to the level of education of professors in teacher preparation programs at the collegiate level. Of this, he wrote:

> The minimum scholastic requirement for instructors in the college department of the teacher's college, as determined by the 1926 standards, is graduation from a standard college and, in addition, graduate study equivalent to that required for a master's degree. These standards make provision for teachers who have served in their present positions for five years and who do not meet this requirement. It is recommended that all instructors in the college department possess training which represents three years of graduate study (Schmitz, p. 81).

During the time period under consideration, systemic and organizational changes occur in these particular areas.

Sister Formation 1940s

In 1941, Bertrande Meyers, DC wrote a dissertation addressing her concerns with inadequate sister teacher preparation. The dissertation entitled, T*he Education of Sisters: A Plan for Integrating the Religious, Social, Cultural and Professional Training of Sisters* stated that sisters required, "instruction of a kind that could not be gained at home under the tutelage of sisters" (Meyers, 1941, p. 16). To help fill this deficit, Catholic colleges and universities expanded course offerings to meet professional demands of teaching sisters. To cite one example, Meyers wrote, "Marquette's offering was typical of all. It consisted of classes by the department of education between four and six on Saturday afternoons and regular summer school

sessions" (p.17). The logistics involved with organizing and facilitating these types of educational programs were extensive. Travel to and from courses posed hardships for congregations and sisters. Courses were often located far from schools where sisters were actively teaching. As Meyer's noted, sisters would "ride from sixty to one hundred miles Friday evenings in order to attend Saturday classes" (p. 38). In addition to the time it took to travel, expenses were also problematic. Travel was expensive and transportation, coupled with room and board for summer sessions, was costly. Tuition also had to be paid, and educational materials required for courses had to be purchased (Meyers, 1941). Meyers explains that the combination of these factors, "gave rise to the sending of sisters to secular universities. Such institutions charged a lower tuition rate, and in some localities, were situated within a short distance of the convents" (Meyers, p. 43). Despite there being more geographically accessible, and perhaps having lower tuition fees, congregations still preferred to send sisters to Catholic institutions when possible.

The desire to support Catholic higher education led to the growth and expansion of Catholic teaching colleges and course offerings. To ensure the academic integrity of such programs, colleges and universities desired well-trained faculties in their higher education programs. Madaleva Wolff, CSC wrote, "Good teachers are the first requisite for a good school (1962, p. 96). Wolff recognized that leadership is instrumental in developing quality educational programs. Wolff, named President of Saint Mary's College in 1934, developed a recruitment and retention program to secure faculty she deemed well qualified to instruct and lead the college's many programs, including teacher preparation (Wolff, 1962). Of faculty, she wrote, "We set about following Mother Pauline's sustained precedent of finding them, making them and keeping them." Not all faculty members were Catholic, however. Wolff's own doctorate was earned at

the University of California, Berkeley. Wolff recruited teachers from Syracuse University, University of Notre Dame, and Catholic University, among others (Wolff, 1962). Wolff also augmented and restructured curricular and instructional programs at St. Mary's College. The literature indicates that her desire was to secure professionals with the highest level of education and expertise to teach at the collegiate level, hoping that their expertise would be disseminated to undergraduate students. Some of her pupils were sisters who would assume teaching positions in Catholic schools. Wolff noted, "This was the status quo in 1934" (1962, p. 96). As populations of Catholic schools grew in the 1950s, maintaining this status quo became problematic. In the 1950s, sisters were sent out on mission early and, therefore, did not experience the same time and attention granted to their development as was done previously.

Sisters recognized the need to expand existing formal teacher preparation programs; this idea gained momentum in the late 1940s and early 1950s. As president of St. Mary's College, Wolff believed that affiliation in professional organizations was essential to the growth and development of professionals, including teachers (Wolff, 1962). She, among others, supported the development of a section of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) committed to teacher preparation. Professional affiliations, linked with higher education and formal teacher training programs, thus began to evolve. It was during this time that Wolff began focusing on what she called the "mediocrity of the Catholic mind scarcely advert to the untrained or inadequately trained sisters who have been teaching generations of parish school children" (1959, p. 110). It was commonplace for Catholic families to entrust the education of their children to parish schools because the teachers were members of religious orders. To assume that women were capable of something as arduous as teaching simply because they were sisters is

significant. Rather, Wolff advocated for maintaining academic integrity and accountability through proper teacher development and training (Wolff, 1962).

Enrolling children in parochial schools was intended to provide quality academic learning alongside sound knowledge of the Catholic faith. In an earlier study completed in 1941, Meyers suggested that lay teachers be put into classrooms while sisters obtained necessary education. She wrote, "Parents have no objections to lay teachers for special classes such as physical education, music, etc." (Meyers, 1941, p. 118). Later, Wolff, demonstrating a clear understanding of this, lobbied the NCEA for a division dedicated to managing and facilitating sister teacher training. In preparation for the 1948 spring meeting of the NCEA, Wolff issued a call for papers on sister-training procedures. She received several proposals, all of which she indicated were "good enough" for publication (Wolff, 1962, p. 112). In *My First Seventy Years*, Wolff reflected on the teacher preparation session at the association's meeting. She recalled that the responses from those in attendance were overwhelmingly positive and that the session attracted far more attendees than could have been anticipated. The session had to be relocated several times to accommodate all those interested in sister formation (McDermott, 1965; Eby, 2000 & Kennelly, 2009).

Prior to the meeting, six teaching congregations provided Wolff with their training procedures. Content retrieved from them was used to create a model training program for a hypothetical young woman named Sr. Lucy. The prototype describing the education of Sr. Lucy offered an idealized model of how teaching congregations could effectively educate young women prior to being sent on mission in schools. Wolff and others recognized that the momentum that begun in 1948 needed to continue if improvements to sister teacher preparation were to occur.

Maria [Concepta] McDermott, CSC made an interesting observation in *The Making of a Sister Teacher* writing, "No one can actually say this was the beginning of the Sister Formation Program. Its beginnings were incipient efforts in many communities to achieve the ideal of the Sister Formation Program, which met with varying degrees of success and failure" (1965, p. 157). What is clear in the literature is that the 1948 meeting represented a moment of widespread awareness and dedication to improved preparation of teaching sisters. Subsequently, the professional preparation of teaching sisters continued to be a topic of frequent discussion in the late 1940s and into the early 1950s.

<div align="center">Mentoring and Teaching Congregations</div>

Only one study, *Pioneer Mentoring in Teacher Preparation: From Voices of Women Religious* by Keavina Keating, CCVI and Mary Peter Traviss, OP which includes sisters who entered between the 1920s and the 1960s, specifically addresses how experienced teaching sisters offered help, encouragement, and instructional support to those with less experience. The authors state in this research that, "is the result of a qualitative research study based on data gathered from structural interviews with sixty women religious belonging to twelve religious institutes that had been founded to teach as their major work in the United States" (Keating and Traviss, 2000, p. 2). Keating and Traviss focused their research on sister teacher preparation from the 1920s through the 1970s. With a few exceptions, the majority of participants included in their study ranged in age between 60 and 70 years old.

A particular strength of the Keating and Traviss study is an operative definition of mentoring. Keating and Traviss define mentors as "experienced teachers serving as coaches." The authors continue by noting that, "they provide emotional support and professional advice and assistance, sometimes attending the new teachers' classes to offer practical suggestions even

while they often work in different schools, grade levels or subjects than the novices" (Keating &
Traviss, 2001 p. 17). The definition of mentoring provided by Keating and Traviss is particularly
applicable to my study, as it provides a framework for the construction and application of the
concept of mentoring to teaching sisters.

The Keating and Traviss study suggests that participants' desires to enter religious life
took precedence over their choice of teaching as an occupation. Their text offers five examples
of women choosing religious life but "not want[ing] to teach" (Keating & Traviss, 2001, p. 39-
40). The authors wrote, "Once the young sisters were immersed in the culture of a teaching order
and started to learn about teaching, they then began to like it" (2001, p. 41). This is a limitation
of their study because we cannot conclude that everyone who entered the classroom enjoyed it,
nor can we surmise that all teachers enjoyed the classroom to the same degree. This leads to an
unfair assumption that all women loved teaching, when it is entirely possible that they did not.
Keating and Traviss offer the following example that further illustrates that argument:

> An eighty-two-year-old sister tells of being sent out to teach on the very day she
> pronounced her first vows. She was given 112 first-grade girls and a five-cent blank
> copybook for her lesson plans, and the lesson plan book of the sister who taught the boys
> of the first grade. She tells of replicating the other sister's plan book meticulously
> (Keating & Traviss, 2001 p. 59).

In this example, the authors suggest that sister teachers were able to instruct "meticulously"
under such circumstances. It is uncertain whether she was instructing meticulously or just
meticulously copying the plan book. There is too much information omitted from their study to
draw conclusions about teaching and professional efficacy. Despite this, Keating and Traviss
suggest mentoring was beneficial and they conclude that teaching nuns were happy.

There are other noticeable shortcomings in the Keating and Traviss study as well. Keating and Traviss suggest teaching sisters faced few, if any, hardships. They contend that God provided sisters with the grace to get them through whatever adversities they faced (Keating and Traviss, 2001). The gaps in their study exist in spaces that critically consider how difficult teaching can be, especially for young sisters with inadequate preparation.

Sister Formation 1950s - Sister Formation Conference

Mary Emil Penet, IHM is credited with "shaping the first national organization of American women religious, the Sister Formation Conference" (Glisky, 2006, p. 360). At the 1952 meeting of the NCEA, Penet proposed "a) withholding sisters in formation from active ministry until completion of their undergraduate studies; b) hiring a set percentage of lay teachers in the schools; and c) researching nationally the financial and educational situation within religious communities" (Glisky, 2006, p. 365). Penet then organized an inter-congregational committee charged with collecting national data on sister formation. The committee designed and distributed a survey instrument, which was sent to 377 General Superiors of all religious congregations "having even one school in the United States" (Glisky, 2006, p. 366). Of the 255 respondents only 13 communities indicated they had a degree program for their sisters (Glisky, 2006).

The following year, Penet recounted the findings of the survey to a broad audience. Respondents reported that enacting sister formation programming was not easy; they cited a variety of contributing factors that limited access and implementation of sister formation programs, including geography, limited finances, and lack of resources. Sisters teaching in rural or remote areas lacked transportation and resources for face-to-face meetings. At this time, sisters rarely had driver's licenses, nor did they own vehicles. Small congregations, in particular,

lacked financial revenue and academic resources. Penet, recognizing that congregations lacked mechanisms for collaboration among and between various orders, suggested implementing structures to unify individual congregations operating schools within particular dioceses (Glisky, 2006). Penet saw collaboration and inter-congregational support as necessary for overcoming some of these challenges. This flurry of activity is referred to in the literature as the Sister Formation Movement. Penet worked to formalize the activities of the movement. This ultimately led to the development of a conference aimed at addressing the concerns she and others raised regarding improving teacher quality.

Important distinctions have to be made regarding the Sister Formation Movement and the Sister Formation Conference. The Sister Formation Movement preceded the Sister Formation Conference. The work that sisters engaged in prior to the establishment of a formal conference is referenced as a movement in the inaugural issue of the *Sister Formation Bulletin: Official Publication of the Sister Formation Conference* (Bulletin, 1954)[3]. The inaugural issue notes that on April 21, 1954 the University Department of the NCEA formally established the Sister Formation Conference (SFC). A clear distinction was made in the *Bulletin* instructing all activities occurring after April 21, 1954 be referred to as activities. Hereafter, references to this formal conference are referred to as the Sister Formation Conference (SFC).

The prevailing goal of the SFC was to improve the experiences of women in formation programs. In addition to addressing the theological/faith formation of sisters, the SFC addressed the professional preparation of teaching sisters. The National Sister Formation Committee consisted of five founding sisters, including, "Sr. Mary Emil Penet, IHM Chairman, Sr. Mary Basil, SSND Secretary, Sr. Celine, CR, Sr. M. Emmanuel OSF, Mother Mary Florence SL, Sr.

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[3] *The Sister Formation Bulletin: Official Publication of the Sister Formation Conference* will be referred to as *Bulletin* in subsequent references.

M. Gerard OSF, and Sr. Mary Richardine BVM" (Bulletin, 1954 p. 1). All members are credited

with making significant contributions, but Penet's vision as chair most substantially advanced

the goals of the organization[4].

As chairperson of the SFC, Penet sought to advance the work of the SFM and improve

communication among constituents. In 1954, Penet named Ritamary Bradley, CHM editor of the

Bulletin. The literature states, "So far as we can determine, the *Sister Formation Bulletin* is the

only English language periodical in the world devoted exclusively to the literature on the pre-

service and in-service formation of sisters" (*Bulletin*, 1954 p. vii). Glisky writes, "Each issue

carried a lead article by some authority along with news of regional and national Sister

Formation activity along with summaries and locations of other resources (Glisky, 2006, p. 367).

The *Bulletin* was published quarterly, and communication within, and among, congregations

improved as a result of it. It aimed to increase communication and announce new developments

with regard to the spiritual and professional training of sisters (Kennelly, 2009). Circulation

extended to 37 countries and 9,000+ constituents in the 1960s (Glisky, 2006).

The *Bulletin* became an extraordinary resource for teaching congregations and a platform

for communities to exchange ideas, pass along regional news, and announce relevant workshops

and professional development opportunities. Further, it provided professional research and

publications related to pedagogy and instruction. In addition to topics of particular relevance, the

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[4] Although Mary Emil Penet was a member of the Sister Servants of the Immaculate

Heart of Mary in Monroe, MI, this congregation is not the same congregation of Sisters, Servants

of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) interviewed for this dissertation.

Bulletin also addressed areas outside the formal or pedagogical scope of the SFC. For example, the Bulletin states:

> Sister formation is taken to include the spiritual and intellectual, formal and informal, pre-service and in-service training of sisters. From this there flow negatives. We are not concerned in our conferences or in the bulletin with the general problems of the schools. These are important but not our province (*Bulletin*, 1954 p.12).

This example highlights the professional mission of the organization and reinforces its goals. The SFC sought to increase the level of professionalization and training of teaching sisters, and the Bulletin reinforced these desires.

Although the SFC was heavily focused on improving experiences of sisters currently in formation programs, its aims did not end there. SFC also sought to provide professional development to sister teachers in the field and to close the gap on sisters trudging through the 20-year plan. In *Called to Serve: A History of Nuns in America*, Margaret McGuiness describes the challenges imposed by the 20-year plan. McGuinness suggests that the postulancy and novitiate did not provide adequate time for teacher preparation, and attending college on weekends sometimes took 15 to 20 years before a degree was earned (McGuinness, 2013). Interrupted and inconsistent education was stressful and required adjustment. Having to endure this for 15-20 years was likely very challenging for sisters.

In lieu of degrees, sisters relied on professional development provided by their congregations and other congregations. Professional development was announced in the SFC *Bulletin*. Professional development became a mutual and shared endeavor among communities: resources were dispersed in ways that reduced geographic challenges, young sisters began completing bachelor's degrees with state certification prior to entering the classroom, and

teaching sisters sharpened pedagogical and instructional skills. Judith Eby, RSM described the SFC as "concerned with the spiritual and intellectual, formal and informal, pre-service and in-service training of sisters" (2000, p. 64). Eby also stated, "the SFC was to assist with the development of the juniorate program, with a bachelor's degree minimum as the academic base [for sisters.]" (p. 104). The SFC reformed the way communities implemented pre-service teacher training by developing comprehensive systems of communication, support, and resources to improve pre-service teacher proficiencies across congregations.

1950s-1960s – Sister Formation Conference and the Juniorate

The SFC recommended that teaching congregations establish juniorates to prepare teaching sisters for complex roles in schools. Of the juniorates, Salazar states, "The primary aim of the juniorate is to give a full apostolic and specific training within the context of a continued and integrated religious growth and development which is fully human and fully Christian" (1971, p. 53). This resulted in many congregations opening junior (formation) colleges of their own or collaborating with other congregations already conducting two-year or four-year colleges to advance the education of all teaching sisters. These colleges were seen by some as the solution to the complex problem of sister formation (Salazar, 1971). Sisters in juniorate programs were held back from mission in schools until they had completed degrees. "A juniorate would extend the formation period beyond the novitiate, affording the time, idealistically for the sister to finish her undergraduate work and to successfully integrate the spiritual life with her apostolic commitment" (Schneider, 1988, pp. 66).

Not all congregations established juniorates, however, and not all did so at the same time. This was another reason the *Bulletin* became so helpful for the SFC. The *Bulletin* provided congregations without juniorates information on professional programs and courses led by other

congregations with colleges that were available for all congregations to enroll or participate in. Juniorate sisters, therefore, developed professional skills and acquired knowledge that teaching sisters who preceded them lacked. McDermott writes, "In August 1964, the first group to complete the five-year program went into parochial and private schools after a year's postulancy, a canonical year, a post canonical year, and two years in the juniorate as temporarily professed sisters" (1965, p. 167). Unlike those on the 20-year plan, juniorate sisters frequently completed local and state certification criteria before entering the classroom.

Summary

This chapter has provided an in-depth review of the literature on mentoring, mentoring in religious congregations, and sister formation. The first section provided an overview of mentoring practices in the workplace; the second related specifically to the only available study examining mentoring in religious communities, and the final section described a chronological overview of sister formation. Each of these three areas relate to my research questions outlined in chapter one. For example, the application of a chronological approach to the literature on sister formation provides a framework for understanding what support was in place in specific years during the period under consideration. My research seeks to fill gaps in the existing literature by considering how mentoring became a substantial mechanism of teacher preparation at a time when few other options were available. Furthermore, this dissertation adds to this research by providing detailed examples of what teaching sisters in one diocese actually did to "Support and guide novices' learning" (Schwille, 2008, p. 143).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I discuss using qualitative research methods to understand how sisters experienced mentoring between the years 1940-1965. I have organized my methods chapter into subsections arranged by topic. In the first section, I begin by discussing phenomenological approaches, research design and procedures used to explore sister teacher formation and mentoring practices. Starting with an overview of the design provides a rationale for using qualitative research methods including oral history interviews and archival resources when researching teaching nuns. The second section, participant selection and criteria, includes a discussion of participant recruitment. Subsequent sections focus on data collection, data analysis and interpretation and data saturation. I conclude the chapter by examining my own researcher subjectivity and considering limitations of this methodology.

Research Design

This study is an attempt to gather information about how sisters experienced and made sense of the phenomenon of mentoring as a means of sister teacher formation. Unlike traditional qualitative approaches that seek to find common themes or emergent threads across data sets, (Bogden & Biklen, 2007), phenomenological approaches aid researchers in examining ordinary, everyday experiences that are often taken for granted by the actors involved. As Van Manen writes in *Phenomenology of Practice*, "the term method refers to the way or attitude of approaching a phenomenon," (Van Manen, 2014, p. 26). Patton (2002) also writes that phenomenology requires "carefully and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience phenomenon – how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (p. 104). The purpose is to accurately capture how the people who are the focus of the study make sense of a particular phenomenon, not to generate

an "objective" account of that phenomenon or to check the accuracy of their accounts against other sources of data. For this project I implemented qualitative research methods, including oral history interviews and focus groups. I also conducted archival research examining both primary and secondary-source documents housed in congregational archives. Focus groups and oral history interviews allow participants to provide first-person narrative accounts and personal experiences relative to mentoring experiences of teaching sisters. Research suggests that oral history interviews are particularly useful when studying historical subjects or marginalized groups, and mid-century teaching nuns fit these criteria well since they are subordinate to their male hierarchy in the Catholic Church (Ritchie, 2003). Oral history interviews allowed sisters to tell their own stories, using their voice and personal experiences to help me understand how mentoring was situated within congregations.

Catholic women religious have been excluded from the historical narratives about teaching and church history for several reasons. As teachers, they taught in an institutional setting, parochial schools that has received little attention from scholars. As women, they are subordinate in broad historical narratives focused primarily on men; in addition, they ministered in a church that placed– and continues to place– emphasis on the male hierarchy, resulting in increased marginalization. Oral historians suggest that including the voices of those traditionally excluded from the mainstream narrative adds to the richness and authentication of historical events (Ritchie, 2003; Portelli, 1990; McKenna, 2003). Firsthand accounts provided by sisters themselves contribute to broader understandings of the historical time period; more specifically, such accounts detail how mentoring was viewed, experienced, and implemented.

Oral history interviews work well when applied to communities or groups, including Catholic teaching sisters. A notable strength includes the tone and inflection of spoken meaning

and oration as sisters recounted their memories and experiences. The enunciation or emphasis on specific words added detail and depth of meaning to the narrative they offered. Portelli describes this as "the tone and volume range and the rhythm of popular speech carry implicit meaning and social connotations which are not reproducible in writing – unless, and then in adequate and hardly accessible form, as musical notation" (1990, p. 47). The timeliness of this research, conducted in the second decade of the twenty-first century, is significant, as my participants are elderly women who may not be available in the near future. Carole Garibaldi Rogers writes: "Sisters of this generation were belatedly, but effectively educated and trained to be successful - not in worldly or financial ways, but in their ministries. They made great contributions to the Catholic Church and to American society because of that" (p. xviii). Rogers reminds us that the contributions of teaching nuns must not be forgotten. As such, I occasionally listened to the digital recordings of my interviews simply to hear the sound of a woman's voice as she augments the historical narrative. This adds to a more complete and explicit understanding of the benefits teaching nuns made in American education.

The oral history interview also enables participants to share their complex lives and lived experiences with others. Further, participants are empowered through the process to tell their stories using their voices. The experiences of people's lives, even the most marginalized, are important and should be researched and studied for the contributions they can add to a field of work. Portelli further states, "The telling of a story preserves the teller from oblivion; the story builds the identity of the teller and the legitimacy, which she or he leaves for the future" (1990, p. 59). In the absence of the oral history interview, this sister's story might be lost.

Another benefit of oral history is the rapport and relationship that can be built between the interviewer and the interviewee. Ritchie writes, "Interviewers need to spend some time

establishing rapport, building up to the central issue, and understanding its context in the interviewee's life," (p. 115). The more time spent between the interviewer and interviewee, the more likely rapport is to develop. Of this, Ritchie writes, "rapport is necessary to ask difficult questions and to give honest answers," (p. 87). Oral history interviews allow for shared authority and democratic processes. Related to rapport and shared authority, one sister has asked me to prepare her eulogy because of the relationship we developed over time; she trusts that her story will be posthumously shared with others. Her oral history is the documentation of her extraordinary life. "The documents of the oral history are always the result of a relationship, of a shared project in which both the interviewer and the interviewer are involved together, if not in harmony" (Portelli, 1990, p. 54).

Many sisters are insightful, thought provoking, engaging, and a pleasure to work with. Most importantly, they care about this topic. Throughout this project, sisters have been eager to share their formation experiences. My desire to learn, coupled with their desire to share, has proven constructive to the research process and the sisters who chose to participate in this study had much to offer. To delve deeply into their collective experience, broad, open-ended questioning encouraged participants to drive the narrative and allowed them to draw upon what they thought was important to share. Ritchie suggests that introducing a historical fact followed by an open-ended question affords participants the opportunity to situate their responses in historical experiences while "encouraging interviewees to relate and to interpret their own stories," (2007, p. 93). In her own work with women religious, McKenna emphasizes the importance of using open-ended interviews when she states, "I wanted to have open-ended interviews rather than use formal questionnaires. I was keen to foster an environment within which women could feel relaxed and hopefully enjoy the experience" (2003, p. 67). The Keating

and Traviss book did use a formal written questionnaire, but not participant interviews. The inclusion of varying religious orders offered insight and multiple perspectives on the same, or similar, issues and open-ended questions helped distinguish individual vs. collective accounts of participant recollections and understandings.

Oral history interviews permit the stories told by women religious to provide historical data. Kittell writes, "By telling what their lives were like throughout upheavals and joys of renewal, they [sisters] helped me understand and believe" (2009, p. 11). As an interviewer, I felt the personal anecdotes provided by participants were engaging and offered credibility to the narrative. Ritchie mentions the meaningfulness of the narrative when he states, "Anecdotes often focused on humorous situations and characteristics and in conversation are designed to stimulate a smile or a laugh" (2003, p. 121). The stories told by participants in this study brought humor and the human experience to the data set; this was very important to this project because sisters were separate from the laity and the world. Theirs was a mysterious life, hidden beneath wool habits and cloistered and/or convent walls. Of this, McKenna states, "We know very little about the personal experiences of these women" (2003, p. 66).

Participant Selection and Criteria

My research considered the experiences of religious women in four congregations in the Diocese of Syracuse, New York, between 1940 and 1965. These congregations were selected because they had active teaching apostolates in the Diocese of Syracuse in the time period under consideration. These selected congregations had the largest presence in this diocese during the time period in question. My study explored how mentoring was experienced by individuals and how it was applied both within and across congregations. Cross-congregational research helped develop an understanding of how individual congregations provided help and how such help was

situated among various congregations. Across congregations, women who took vows in the mid-twentieth century participated in focus groups and interviews to discuss their formation experiences and the roles they assumed in teaching ministries. Congregations include the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHMs) of Scranton, Pennsylvania; Sisters of the Third Franciscan Order of Saint Francis (OSFs) of Syracuse, New York; Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (CSJs) of Latham, New York; and Congregation of the Sisters of St. Felix of Cantalice (Felicians, or CSSFs) of Buffalo, New York.

I conducted focus groups and oral history interviews with teaching sisters who entered congregation between 1940 and 1965. All participants, assigned pseudonyms to protect anonymity, were teachers or principals in parochial schools in the Diocese of Syracuse. In alignment with phenomenological approaches interview questions were practically posed and asked sisters to discuss what their individual experiences with mentoring were like (Van Manen, 2014). My semi- structured interviews included questions such as: 1) When did you enter community?; 2) How did the decision to enter religious community impact your life at the time?; 3) How did your order prepare you for the teaching apostolate?; 4) How were you helped formally and informally by others? 5) How did you offer support formally or informally? 6) What were your experiences with the Sister Formation Conference?; A complete list of sample questions can be found in the appendices section of this dissertation. These questions are derived from the literature on the professional formation of sisters, relative to the period under consideration. As oral history methodology suggests, I began by asking historically relevant questions before moving on with research questions. In this case, that involved general questions such as, when and why did you enter? I also asked participants to discuss their personal educational experiences. As the interview progressed, I posed more targeted and specific

questions. Therefore, the research questions above were questions distinctly aligned with the literature review and geared toward what I was hoping to understand by conducting this study. Questions encouraged sisters to discuss their individual experiences with informal methods of teacher development, including peer-to-peer support and peer-to-peer coaching. I hoped to learn how sisters were supported and by whom. I was also interested in understanding, given the structures of religious life– tight schedules, time set aside for prayer, practicing grand silence, teaching, completing chores, etc.– how and when did sisters engaged in supportive professional practices? Sisters also provided an understanding of how outside influences such as Sister Formation impacted teacher support/training during this time period. As I detail in later chapters, these questions align with the existing literature but also add to what we know about how teaching congregations used mentoring to develop professional teaching skills.

All of the congregations I studied have congregational historians or archivists who helped me to secure participants. If the historian suggested beginning with a focus group, I did. Afterward, I would ask participants if they would like to participate in individual interviews. The IHM focus group consisted of nine members of the congregation, followed by oral history interviews with six members. The CSJ focus group consisted seven participants, followed by eight oral history interviews. Three OSFs and seven CSSFs participated in individual oral history interviews. However, I only included data for two of the three OSFs interviewed. One participant left congregational life and therefore, the data she provided was removed from final data sets. Four outside participants also participated in oral history interviews. Outside participants are defined as those who are not women religious and are not affiliated with one of the four congregations specifically mentioned for this study. However, their perspectives provide insights regarding the historical time period under consideration (Ritchie, 2003). Outside participants

included a former diocesan superintendent, a current administrator in the Diocese of Syracuse, a historian whose research centers largely on women religious, and a former member of the Society of the Sacred Heart. These interviews advanced my understanding of this topic and established a historical context. For example, the diocesan superintendent provided useful information on diocesan policies and procedures pertaining to teacher training during the 1960s. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants to protect anonymity.

The number of participants varied across congregations. As stated above, I interviewed three members of the OSF congregation, but chose to include data from two participants because one subject has left congregational life. The OSF congregation was also in the midst of the canonization of Sister Marianne Cope at the time of this research. The congregation was also experiencing a large move from their motherhouse in the City of Syracuse to a newly constructed home in a suburb. The changes associated with these factors affected the number of participants involved in the study. Some participants were interviewed once, others on more than one occasion. For example, an elderly sister who became easily tired was interviewed twice to accommodate the need for shorter interview sessions. Sisters in residence at convents were more accessible for multiple interviews than sisters living remotely. Essentially, the number of interviews depended on health, accessibility (some sisters have since gone on mission), and death.

In qualitative research, researchers have to be cognizant of "confidentiality and anonymity" of participants (Ritchie, 2014, p. 85). This is particularly true when considering religious congregations with shrinking membership. To mask participants, the only disclosure included is the congregational affiliation. I made this decision to protect the identities of sisters who participated in this study.

Table 1

Participants

Participants Sisters, Servants Immaculate Heart Of Mary, Scranton, PA	Congregation of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany, NY	Third Order of Saint Francis Syracuse, NY	Felician Franciscan Buffalo, NY
Focus Group 9	7	0	0
Individual 6 Interview	8	3*	7*

*Indicates one participant entered in 1982; however, none of the data from that interview was included in my findings
*Three OSFs were interviewed; data included for two because one participant left congregation

Participant Recruitment

I started my research by contacting the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

(IHMs) of Scranton, Pennsylvania. After this, I used what Bogden and Biklen refer to as an

overt, cooperative style to gain access to participants and settings (2007). I explained my ideas

for the dissertation and provided copies of approved Internal Review Board Documents related

to the project. Research settings included classrooms, learning centers, offices located in area

hospitals, local and regional convents, and public libraries. Locations varied because some

participants still work in schools, while others have retired or changed occupations.

After completing some research with IHMs, I began implementing a snowball sampling

technique (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) to expand my sample with existing participants

recommending other participants to interview. This was generally how I added participants from

within particular congregations. Most congregations have a historian/archivist and, as stated

earlier, all of the congregations I studied did. To add additional participants/congregations to the

study over time, I worked with these individuals to gain access to their communities and

respective archives. In Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences, Irving Seidman refers to such individuals as "gatekeepers" (2006, p. 43). Gatekeepers are those who facilitate or deny researchers access to particular groups. After contacting the congregational historian by phone and providing her with information about my study, I sent her copies of all pertinent, approved Internal Review Board documents. Afterward, I arranged either a focus group or individual interviews.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

To better understand how sisters supported one another in the development of teaching skills, I conducted focus groups and oral history interviews. I also collected data in congregational archives. In the following section I provide a thorough discussion of my data collection procedures.

Focus Groups and Oral History Interviews

The literature on mentoring suggests that "Mentoring may or may not be publicly recognized or observable, and the members may not even recognize the mentoring component of their relationship until it is brought to their attention" (Ragins, 1997, p. 484). Qualitative methods, including oral history interviews and focus groups, provided personal insights into the lived experiences sisters had with mentoring. The personal narratives of teaching sisters provided information concerning how sisters helped one another develop teaching skills and how that assistance changed during the 25-year period. "At the root of an in-depth interview is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2006, p. 9). Given Seidman's assertion, the personal narrative is the best method to capture the essence of these understandings.

The focus group interview, with two of the four congregations, the IHMs and the CSJs, each lasted approximately one-and-one-half hours. All participants in focus groups were women who entered congregation during the time period under consideration. All of the subjects I interviewed entered the postulancy after completing high school. In total, there were 36 participants interviewed; however, data for 34 was included in my study. I excluded data from a former OSF because she has since left community and I also omitted data from one CSSF who entered after the time period specified in my guidelines. Of the 34 total participants included, 15 entered before the Sister Formation Conference was formally established in 1954 and 19 entered afterward.

The IHM focus group was the first I completed, and I found it particularly helpful because it felt comfortable and inviting. All participants held positions in schools as teachers and/or administrators, all were warm and welcoming, and all expressed interest in my topic of study. The 12 sisters present at this initial focus group seemed comfortable with one another and laughter and sharing occurred often. The social context of the interview allowed me to listen and observe as sister teachers spoke openly and offered their perspectives on how they helped and supported one another in schools. Exchanges between sisters were frequent, and comparisons were made that provided data for close consideration later. I found working with a group of sisters helpful because they introduced me to vocabulary and processes that I was previously unfamiliar with.

As sisters discussed their individual experience with sister formation and compared it to others in the group, I listened attentively, recording notes and observations. Afterward, I transcribed the focus groups and coded the data according to common or emergent themes. I highlighted frequently occurring words such as aspirancy, obedience, novitiate, teaching

placement, classroom management, manuals etc. Having critical concepts color-coded was helpful for locating them in the transcripts as well as for making cross comparative analyses.

Based on the testimony of participants, it was evident that formation in this congregation changed dramatically over time. My work with the IHMs yielded a better understanding of sister formation and supported my skills in conducting focus groups. I also used a focus group in my research with the CSJs. The CSJ focus group was comprised of six women religious. Like the IHMs, all members held teaching and/or leadership positions in schools. With the CSJs, the social aspect of the focus group felt comfortable for me and helped shape my understanding of concepts closely associated with their experience in religious life. The CSJs built upon my existing knowledge by offering their individual formation experiences based upon the specific year they entered community. After the focus group, I transcribed the recordings and carefully analyzed what sisters said. The process helped me to identify topics for in-depth exploration via subsequent individual oral history interviews.

Focus groups were followed by individual interviews typically lasting one or two hours. Some participants were interviewed only once, and others were interviewed more than once. Multiple interviews were sometimes necessary for seeking clarification, adding to the data sets, and also for allowing extra time for sisters who became tired as part of the process. During the initial interview, participants were prompted to recall their early lives and to discuss their experiences with family, faith, and school. Learning about their individual educational experiences informed me as to whether or not they had been educated by sisters themselves. This was interesting to me because there seemed to be a correlation between attending a Catholic school and entering religious life. I was also interested to know if they entered the postulancy through aspiracy programs or later and, most importantly, why they were drawn to religious life.

The second part of the oral history interview focused specifically on sister formation experiences. I asked questions related to their formation experiences as postulants and novices and inquired about when they were sent out to teach. I began to see patterns of commonality early in the research. Depending on when a woman entered religious life, regardless of which congregation she entered, her formation experience was similar across all four congregations. However, the time of entrance had a direct impact on the type of formation experience a woman had. Rogers addresses some of these changes and writes, "The SFC created a large group of highly educated sisters. Prior to the late 1950s, it typically took young sisters 20 years, attending classes on Saturdays and during the summers, to complete her college degree. The impetus of the Sister Formation Conference created new college curricula and, in some cases, new colleges, specifically to educate sisters" (Rogers, 2014, p. xii). Therefore, women entering later, after these components were implemented organizationally, would have been experienced formation differently from women entering prior to these developments.

Finally, we discussed individual experiences related to the topic of internal networks of support. Sisters were asked to describe how they experienced formation as postulants, novitiates and teachers/administrators. I also asked them to discuss how they were helped by other sisters. Additionally, I asked sisters to discuss how they extended help to others. "The combination of exploring the past to clarify the events that led participants to where they are now" establishes a foundation for understanding sister formation and changes within it over a 25-year period (Seidman, 2006, p. 19). As sisters recalled these experiences, they were considering practices that may have been taken for granted as they developed professional skills.

Archival Resources

Data collection also included congregational archives. I worked in archives located in

Syracuse, Latham, and Buffalo, New York, as well as Scranton, Pennsylvania. St. Bonaventure

University, located in St. Bonaventure, New York, has limited, but useful, holdings. For

example, primary source documents, including the *Sister Formation Bulletin*, can be found in the

St. Bonaventure University archives. In my research for this dissertation, I reviewed

congregational histories, novitiate records, yearbooks, newspaper clippings, school histories,

photographs, etc. Additional sources of archival data collection included Constitutions, General

Chapter notes, apostolate questionnaires, lists of colleges and universities attended, etc.

Documents such as these provide useful information for understanding individuals and

congregations. The careful exploration of these documents, coupled with focus groups and oral

history interviews, provides a fuller representation of the time period in question. To use these

properly required that I understand how to conduct research in various archives as well as

negotiating the importance and/or validity of historical documents before writing this

dissertation.

In summer 2014, I was the recipient of a grant from the Cushwa Center for the Study of

American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame to attend its 2014 Rome Seminar. In this

program, scholars from around the world were introduced to several congregational archives

located in and around Rome, Italy. As a scholar, I was fortunate to participate in sessions led by

international historians. I learned valuable strategies for accessing and using archival materials

including manuscripts, letters, photographs, etc. to produce historical scholarship. We also

learned digitized holdings, allowing for research to be conducted remotely. While visiting

archives, archivists guided scholars through their inventories and offered suggestions and

guidance for conducting further research. This personal connection builds relationships between researchers and archivists. This experience expanded my historical knowledge and my understanding of congregational archives, including primary source materials, congregational histories, and other sources. Most beneficial to my participation in the Rome Seminar was being put in direct contact with congregational historians. Archivists have vast knowledge of the pertinent holdings, documents and materials related to my study. If one congregation did not have what I was looking for, the archivist connected me with another congregational historian who might. An example of this included accessing the *Sister Formation Bulletin*. Unfortunately, none of the congregations in my study had copies of the Bulletin for my review; however, I was connected with the archivist at St. Bonaventure University who assisted me in accessing the primary source documents. Congregational archives provide access to basic biographical information, including dates of birth, entrance dates and, in some cases, death. I also reviewed archival holdings that provided records on sister formation and educational training. As such, I am grateful to the University of Notre Dame and the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism. The significance of their programs and investment in this scholarship is reflected in my research skills and subsequent work.

<center>Data Analysis & Interpretation</center>

Phenomenological analysis involves concrete and explicit analysis of individual experiences with a particular phenomenon, in this case, mentoring as a form of professional formation. Van Manen writes, "one should not confuse *concrete* experiential accounts with *interpreted* experiential accounts. The best materials for conducting phenomenological analysis are direct descriptions of the experience, rather than accounts about the experience" (Van Manen, 2014 p. 299). I conducted ongoing data analysis throughout the course of my study

attending to individual experiences as opposed to collective experiences given the collectiveness associated with religious life. I applied a thematic approach using both cross-sectional and non-cross-sectional analysis. "Thematic analysis involves discovering, interpreting and reporting patterns and clusters of meaning within the data" (Ritchie, et al. 2014). I also implemented an incremental approach. Because I synthesize information best when it is presented in text, I transcribed each session then followed with a close read of the data sets. As a reader, I am highly interactive and make frequent notations in margins and on documents I am working with. Interacting with text this way helps me to organize, comprehend and process information. This helped me examine and categorize my data most efficiently. For example, I applied red post it notes onto pages that contained data on teacher preparation, yellow post it notes indicated mentoring and thin yellow strips referred to data on classroom management. This drew my attention to key concepts prevalent within the data sets. When applied across congregations, I considered how these key concepts aligned or differed among the congregations in my study. This process is referenced in the literature as cross-sectional analysis and allowed me to "retrieve similarly labeled chunks of data" (Ritchie, et al. 2014). Cross-sectional analysis was particularly applicable in my research for its relevance in noting similarities and differences across congregations.

My study also incorporated structures of non-cross-sectional analysis. "Non-cross-sectional data organization involves looking at particular cases within a sample, each of which may require a case specific set of categories" (Ritchie, et al. 2014). Non-cross analysis was useful because it allowed me to closely examine formation experiences of women who entered a particular order within a year or two of one another. Because changes were occurring rapidly

throughout the time period, the data indicate that their respective experiences could be vastly different.

Data Saturation

When applied to qualitative research, the term data saturation is defined as "the point of data collection where information you get becomes redundant" (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 69). Religious congregations share collective memory; this means that some memories may be collectively owned or formed by members of a particular congregation. Therefore, I often heard similar, shared stories told by different participants when conducting interviews. I considered these experiences in the context of shared memory and as a form of data saturation. Additional consideration influencing data saturation in this case included declining numbers of women religious. Frankly, age, illness, disease, and death were active factors that contributed to an already limited pool of participants for this study.

Researcher Subjectivity

My own subjectivity and relationship to this topic are also limitations. Before writing this dissertation, I was required to take several courses in qualitative and oral history methodologies. I completed most assignments with the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scranton, Pennsylvania. I was familiar with this congregation and had personal relationships with several of their sisters. I thought working with sisters I knew was a good place to begin observing behavior, using technology to record interviews, writing field notes, and securing preliminary data. This helped me build early research skills that I would hone and continue to develop over time; this was also the setting where I began learning about my own subjectivity and the relationships between researcher and participants.

I was raised Catholic and, as part of my career, worked as a lay principal of a parochial elementary school for three years. During my tenure at the school, there were two sisters working for me. Even though I am Catholic, I am aware of my position as an outsider within the context of religious life. McKenna (2003) addresses similar concerns in her article, "Sisterhood: Exploring Power Relations in the Collection of Oral History." McKenna, a non-practicing Catholic conducting research with Irish nuns, asks, "Will they say things to me they would not otherwise have said?" McKenna's research prompted my own considerations of subjectivity in relation to this work. I hold views that separate me from the institutional church that I refrained from disclosing with participants. I also intentionally withheld this information for fear of judgment and loss of trust. Throughout the course of this study, I acknowledged my personal feelings about Catholicism and made a cognizant decision to omit those feelings from infiltrating interviews. I focused on the research questions and the narrative experiences offered by sisters.

In my experience conducting this research, trust and rapport developed over time. Oral history interviews allowed me to engage with my participants as real people with real experiences. For example, a participant asked me if I would say her eulogy after death. She went on to explain that in her 82 years of service "in this church," no one had ever asked her about her life and the choices she made in it. Within the context of that oral history interview, the sister spoke about significant and intimate experiences: the death of her father, her mother's disappointment and denial about her entering her community, the sadness she felt when the community shaved her head at profession, and more. She was eager to share with me about what it was like to experience the death of a loved one and be forbidden [by community rules] to attend the funeral. She wanted to talk about the practice of head shaving to accommodate the veil, a practice that was traumatic for her. As she reflected on the experience, she said she

thought she was prepared but when her head was shaved, it left her feeling sad, insecure, and confused. Sharing her experiences with me allows her story to be captured and shared with readers of this dissertation. In considering my own positionality, I was careful not to make assumptions that individuals within or across congregations experienced formation in similar ways.

Limitations of Methodology

Before concluding the methodological section of this discussion, I would like to address limitations. One of the limitations that impacted my study was the aging memory of participants. Memory is a multi-faceted and complex issue to consider. Although memory loss is a typical part of the aging process, a person's memory isn't easily controlled. Memory is a significant consideration in my study because most participants taught in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Currently, all are over 65 years of age, with decades of teaching and leadership experience. Participants were asked to describe experiences that occurred 60 or more years ago. It is assumed that memories fade over time. When I interviewed participants, I tried to interview the oldest members of a community first, followed by interviews with younger subjects later. This was necessary because I recognized limitations imposed by memory loss and also feared potential illness or death of participants. Ritchie states, "Oral historians will usually interview the oldest and most significant individuals first, while planning to move to younger or secondary figures later, depending on financial resources, available interviewers, and processing capabilities after the interviews are conducted" (2003, p. 47). This concept was intentionally applied due to the age and health of participants.

The construct of memory is an analytical tool used to examine sister formation experiences. Although historical memory is complex and difficult to rationalize, it requires

careful consideration because it affects how sisters recall and make meaning of significant life events. Memory is further affected by age and constructs of religious life. Many of the women interviewed in my study provided narrative accounts recalled by both individual and collective memory. As a researcher, I repeatedly probed to distinguish the individual experiences from those that stemmed from a collective experience. Combined, these factors required additional research and further considerations be applied to constructs of memory.

In their article titled "The Memory and History Debates: Some International Perspectives," Thompson, Frisch & Hamilton suggest that some historians are critical of the oral methodology and write, "The main thrust of criticism was that memory was unreliable as a historical source because it was distorted by physical deterioration and nostalgia in old age, by the personal bias of both interviewer and interviewee, and by the influence of collective and retrospective versions of the past" (1994, p. 33). Adding to its ambiguity as a construct, the term alone has multiple definitions, and finding one that is perfectly applicable to my work is impossible. Merriam – Webster offers numerous definitions of the term. The textbook definition reads:

> a : a particular act of recall or recollection
> b : an image or impression of one that is remembered <fond memories of her youth>
> c : the time within which past events can be or are remembered

In my opinion, these definitions are problematic because of the subjective meanings of the terms recall, recollect, impression, etc. Sounds, sights, smells, feelings, emotions, all subjective, have value and meaning and, therefore, are acquainted with memories. Memories can be individual, social, and cultural constructs, or communal in nature (Jack, 1998). The subjective details and intricate elements combine to create the definition of memory and its influences in this study. Memory imposes a limitation on this research and other studies like it because it is

subjective, lost over time, and influenced by external factors. Annmarie Turnbull addresses some of these concerns in her own writing on oral history. Turnbull writes, "The criticisms of oral history that emerged from the 1970s often focused on the validity of oral memories. Here for me, there is little at issue." The author continues by explaining, "Information from the oral history interview is merely a single source of evidence imbued, as are all sources, with subjectivity and therefore to be triangulated against as many others as possible, in order, not to find some positivistic truth, but to help build a more complex, richer understanding of the human experiences" (2000, p. 24). This relates particularly well to this project, as my participants are elderly and have spent most of their lives in religious life.

Memory offers an analytic opportunity to explore how both individual and collective memory work within religious congregations. While administering focus groups, I noticed that when one sister offered a narrative, another sister would affirm having had the same experience. It was difficult to know which experiences were individual and which were collective. Further, in religious life it is entirely possible that sisters experienced similar situations that resulted in both individual and collective responses. Thompson, Frisch and Hamilton (1994) refer to these as "Mediated, cultural constructions" (p. 37). The historical narrative, culturally constructed by a group– in this case, religious sisters– becomes part of the collective recollection and memory.

As previously stated, focus groups garnered data for this study. I initially thought that deep, in-depth memories would be better accessed through individual interviews, but I soon learned otherwise. When studying communal organizations, an event can be generalized as having been experienced by many. It was not unusual to hear sisters say, "Oh, that happened to me, too," during a focus group. During individual interviews, I was able to probe, "What did it feel like? What emotions did you experience as a result? And, how was this experience felt as an

individual and as a sister in community?" When feeling is attached to memory, it becomes more impassioned. At the individual level, people make sense of their lives through the stories available to them, and they attempt to fit their lives into the available stories. At a more general level, communities too, adopt narratives that inculcate and confirm their integrity and coherence over time.

Communal stories are created and accepted by various members in congregation. This process indicates essential practical function of narrative counting, serving to draw the community together, and enabling it to formulate action in the present and future based on a common understanding of the past. "The collective memory is thus formulated on the basis of various devices: public myths, founding stories, crucial transforming events, evil and good characters, the division of the past into the time before and after the golden age" (Carr in James 2003, p. 228). Collective memory becomes emblematic memory and is crucial to the study of religious congregations because it influences what sisters choose to include and exclude in individual interviews. It also affects how participants organize and make meaning of events that occurred within their own or collective experiences. In considering communal stories relative to religious life, Bernard Lee proposes that, "group identity is rooted in a narrative structure, that is in recurring patterns of relationships and social activities. The narrative structure of any complex and interesting group, however, is extremely elusive because it is instinctual and unconscious even more than it is deliberate and self-conscious (Lee in Thompson, 1999, p. 245).

Memory imposes limitations in my study. The oral narratives provided are offered by elderly women who have lived together for a very long time, some since adolescence. Years later, as sisters recall events, individual and collective memories are sometimes challenging to distinguish from one another, given the organizational structure of religious communities. Prior

to 1965, most women entered religious life right out of high school and were expected to assimilate and adopt communal identity constructs. This involved developing characteristics and traits associated with particular charisms, or distinctive characteristics of one's community. As women embraced the charism of their community, they developed collective identities. Considering these structures of religious life helped me understand personal and collective constructs of memory.

My lack of experience in the field posed yet another limitation. I refined the craft of conducting oral interviews while considering multidimensional factors such as memory. Skill development and memory are further addressed in the following statement: "Oral history interviews are often conducted years after the event, when memories have grown imprecise, but they have the advantage of being conducted by a trained interviewer who can raise questions and challenge dubious answers" (Ritchie, 2003, p. 27). This statement references the trained researcher as having the ability to decipher complicated data sets. Ritchie emphasizes the importance of conducting thorough research before oral history interviews (2003). In my case, that often meant reading about the congregations online, visiting the archives, and/or visiting Motherhouses. The congregations I studied have photo illustrations decorating the walls of their residences. Photos are frequently accompanied by descriptive details that provide onlookers with information about the congregations. Having prior knowledge of participants and particular congregations helped me organize my thoughts and prepare for the interview process. This preliminary research also helped me write open-ended questions that could become part of the interview process.

As my research questions indicate, the focus of this study was to develop an understanding of how sisters developed teaching skills, how they received and/or offered each

other support, and how this support may have changed during the time period under consideration. As an outsider to religious life, I aimed to pose probing questions that optimized participants' responses and would generate meaningful data. I also listened attentively and recorded field notes and memos. In retrospect, some of my early research indicated that when teaching sisters reflected on their training and formation, their responses sounded mechanical – very matter of fact. The narrative wasn't rich and did not contain personal elements that draw one into the story. These mechanical responses limited the feelings and emotions frequently equated with oral history methodologies. Ritchie calls this "Deconstruction/hidden and unspoken information in a narrative" (2003, p. 29). Throughout the course of this project, and over time that it took to complete, I improved at conducting oral history interviews. I'm more proficient now at speaking slowly, clearly articulating the questions for an elderly audience, providing sufficient wait time, and focusing on open-ended questions. In hindsight, I equate these early limitations with my lack of expertise.

Summary

In Chapter III, I discussed using oral history methods when researching historical subjects, including women religious. In addition to outlining research design procedures, I included pertinent information on administering focus groups and oral history interviews as well using archival documents as a data source. Archival documents are particularly useful for providing the historical context of a time period in question. Given the age of participants, it was important for me to include a section on limitations, including individual and collective memory. In chapter four, I present my findings followed by a discussion of these findings in chapter five. The timeliness of this study is important because congregations are shrinking and considering how sister teachers used mentoring adds to the historical record on sister teacher preparation.

CHAPTER 4:

FINDINGS

In the previous chapter, I provided a rationale and discussion outlining the research

methods I used to understand how sisters developed teaching skills and how they supported each

other's professional development over time. In this chapter, I discuss the data obtained from the

focus groups and oral history interviews. In doing so, I connect participants' responses to the

literature on mentoring and provide a discussion illuminating the connection between my

research questions and my findings on the professionalization of practices in teaching

congregations.

The data secured from this research suggests that teaching sisters in the congregations I

studied developed teaching skills predominantly through mentoring practices. Additionally, my

research indicates that teaching sisters were both recipients and providers of mentoring support.

Mentoring was a central component of the culture of parochial schools and served a variety of

functions, including providing parochial teacher support and professional development. After a

brief section on the role of mentoring in sisters' choice of vocations, I use a chronological

approach to represent how mentoring was experienced relative to my research questions. An

analysis of how this changed over time is provided at the end of this chapter.

Mentoring and Choice of Vocations

In this section, I discuss the draw to vocations and the impact that teaching sisters had on

girls enrolled in parochial schools. Sisters I interviewed (all assigned pseudonyms) mentioned

two distinct pathways to entering their congregations. Several sisters stated that having relatives

in the convent was their first inculcation with religious life. Others mentioned that having

teaching sisters educate them led to their desire to become teaching sisters themselves. During the CSJ focus group, Cindy, who entered the community in 1952, stated:

> I felt I had it [religious vocation] in my genes. I had an aunt who was a physician sister. She was a nurse in Germany. My mother and I visited her there. My mother was very fond of her and frequently talked about how much she liked my aunt and how happy and loving she was. I visited Germany in 1948 and people there thought I looked and walked like my aunt. I figured if I look like her, I should be like her.

Cindy recalled being dawn to religious life because she had a familial connection and thought that religious life would be amiable for her. For her, entering was a natural progression given the strong connection to her mother and her aunt. More importantly, the admiration and affection her mother held for the aunt certainly impressed the young woman, cultivating her desire to enter a community. Other respondents mentioned similar experiences. A CSJ who entered in 1952 "had two aunts and many cousins in the community." Ingrid, an IHM, who entered in 1960, "had cousins in [another] congregation, and her mother was very close to that community."

In other circumstances, young girls observed teaching sisters and desired to be like them, and this led to the desire to enter. Pupils observed the actions and behaviors of their teachers and applied similar characteristics and traits to play. Across interviews, sisters said that when they "played school," they played the sisters they emulated. This desire to emulate was mentioned both in the literature and across oral interviews. My findings indicate that some teaching sisters acquired teaching skills young, even before entering congregation, through careful observation and modeling. My research also suggests that the desire to emulate teaching sisters fed vocations in teaching congregations.

Participants in my study often remarked that attending parochial schools and being taught by particular congregations was part of what drew them to religious life. Roger's writes, "Many of the women, speaking of their early choices, mentioned their teachers in grammar school and high school as the role models they followed" (Roger's, 2011, p. xii). My participants mentioned that they were impressed by teaching religious as schoolgirls. Many mentioned entering congregations as young women with the desire to follow the teachers they admired. Formation directors visited parochial high schools and met with young people who might have a vocation. In addition to having teachers as role models, formation directors were actively meeting with students as a recruitment tool.

Close relationships developed between sisters and pupils in the parochial school. Sisters in my study who had previously been pupils recalled having feelings of admiration and caring for their teaching sisters. Many attributed their desire to enter to these positive feelings. These connections may have been linked to individual relationships that evolved between pupils and their teachers over time. They can also be attributed to the influence of vocation directors. Charlotte, who entered the CSJ community in 1950, explained that her desire to enter was influenced by older sisters in congregational life:

> The only sisters I was familiar with were the Sisters of St. Joseph. They taught me in grammar school and in high school. They were so tender to our family when our mom got sick. That endeared them to me.

Cindy, who entered the CSJs in 1949, was sad when her birth mother became ill. She explained that the congregation provided her with love and support at a critical time in her life; in fulfilling an emotional need, drew her to them. She went on to say:

I had wonderful teachers in school. They were kind, gracious, they were loving. They

were great teachers, and that was another thing that I wanted to emulate.

As stated earlier, Cindy's aunt was a member of a religious community. Her familial connection,

coupled with her educational experience, led to her personal decision to enter. She really

believed that a vocation was in her genes. Similarly, Isla, who entered the IHM community in

1962, said:

I went to a Catholic school and our sisters [IHMs] were always the epitome of

professionalism. They loved what they were doing and you knew that. They found

education extremely important.

Isla acquired all of her education from the IHMs. She desired to achieve advanced education and,

in her interview, said she felt strongly that she could attain the level of education she desired

through religious life. Further, she believed that the IHMs could provide what she desired for

herself. Fatima, a CSSF sister who entered in 1949, said:

I had sisters throughout all my years [in parochial school]. I had very good experiences. I

used to help the teachers and that strengthened my vocation. Every time they needed

something [back before sisters could go places alone] they would ask me to go with

them. I would sit there with them while they visited others.

Fatima had a favorable experience as a student and as an observer of sisters outside the

classroom. This strengthened her desire to enter congregation.

This nurturing and guidance was evident across data sets. The data indicates that, among

the congregations I studied, this drew vocations to the teaching apostolate and was often the first

form of inculcation to teaching practices. Isla, the IHM sister who entered in 1962, said:

Without the schools, I don't think we would have gotten as far as we did. The schools fed

vocations. Heavy, heavy, with vocations, absolutely unbelievable.

Several CSSFs, including Faith, who entered in 1968, and Fatima, who entered in 1949, also

correlated their vocation with positive impressions made by teaching members of the CSSF

congregation, thus illustrating that, among the congregations I researched, sisters felt supported

by women religious prior to entering. The closeness and attachments they experienced

precipitated their desire to enter. This is related to the development of teaching practices because

observation, roleplaying, and modeling are district characteristics of mentoring. This process

became an important component of filling vocations and drew young women to the teaching

profession and religious life.

Some of the women I interviewed did mention feeling conflicted because they either did

not want to teach or because they found that they did not like teaching. Teachers often share

certain dispositions and characteristics, including patience, kindness, and a fondness for children.

Not all women, and certainly not all nuns, had such dispositions. When I inquired about teaching

dispositions, Ingrid, an IHM who entered in 1960, offered the following anecdote describing a

teacher who lacked such disposition:

It was hard. I am sure they were mentored the same way I was but, every day, doing

something you don't like is hard. I lived with one of them. She eventually left the

community. She taught English Language Arts, and she hated it. She would go home,

throw herself on the bed, and cry. That's the truth. I remember the principal saying,

'You're good at it. You handle the kids well and everything.' She said, 'I hate it. I hate

it.' And so, once the door was open, she was onto something else. She left the community

not long thereafter.

The following statement was provided by Chloe, a CSJ who entered in 1953, who said she did not have a desire to teach; rather:

> I felt God was calling me. I did not have any preconceived notions that I wanted to teach in schools. I just felt God was calling me. I never went to Catholic schools, so I didn't know sisters, but if you wanted to serve the church, that's the way you did it.

Chloe went on to say she ultimately enjoyed teaching, but it was not a career she considered before becoming a sister entering. Prior to entering, Chloe's professional interests were in business and accounting. This was repeated by a CSSF who entered in 1968 and explained that she left the teaching ministry in pursuit of other passions after Vatican II.

Sister Teacher Formation, 1940s-1950s: Learning by Doing, Together

Teaching sisters in the 1940s and early 1950s were often young adults. Many respondents said they entered congregation right out of high school. Sisters were sent out on mission young because parochial schools had large classrooms that needed teachers. Cindy, who entered the CSJs in 1949, entered the teaching profession as a teenager herself. She said, "I went out and taught when I was only 18. I taught third grade." She went on to describe her 1940s formation experience in the following way:

> Our formation was based on, the first year was theology. It was called the canonical year. We took no secular subjects. We learned the vows, religious life, the rule, holy rule, and things like that. The second year we were teaching. In the second-year novitiate, we took courses on Saturdays, and those were very central, basic subjects like the liberal arts of a college degree. I don't think we took anything regarding our major. We took math, science, history, that type of thing. Once we left the novitiate, we always taught school

and went to classes either in the evening or on Saturdays. If we lived far away from the

College of St. Rose, then we went in summer time[5].

Based on my research across these four congregations, this was a common experience for

women entering in the 1940s and was similarly described by Sara, who entered the OSFs in

1943, and Fatima, who entered the CSSFs in 1949.

Many of the respondents I spoke with that entered in the 1940s and 1950s took Saturday

classes and attended college in summers; this was frequently interrupted, however. Respondents

recalled that large classes, burgeoning schools, and the needs of the apostolate took precedence

over sisters' education. Due to these circumstances, it sometimes took up to 20 years to complete

a bachelor's degree. Cindy, who entered the CSJs in 1949, said, "Basically, it took me 16 years

to get a degree." Participants, especially those professed in the 1940s and 1950s, frequently

discussed receiving obediences, or directives. In the following statement, Sara, an OSF who

entered in the 1943, recalled the moment she received an obedience requiring that she learn to

drive.

> I lived in a community with five sisters. I really did not want to learn to drive, but I was
>
> the oldest in the house. I was 27, I think. We had young sisters then but the superior
>
> called and told me to learn to drive. I thought, 'Let one of the other sisters that wants to
>
> drive learn.' I said, "Sister, I don't really care to drive. Let Sister so and so learn to drive."
>
> But I got a letter that said the oldest sister should learn to drive. A driving teacher taught
>
> me. I was teaching first grade. You know what it's like? You've been in school all day
>
> and you want them [children] to raise their right hand, you raise your left because you are

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[5] The College of Saint Rose is an institution of higher education opened in 1920 by the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet. Retrieved from https://www.strose.edu/about/history/

facing them. Now raise your right hand. Then I'd lift the left. So, the driving teacher

would say 'make a right turn here' and I'd make a left [laughing].

After being told that she was required to learn to drive, Sara was also told that she would become

the driver's education teacher in the future. Across congregations I studied, a similar narrative

was recalled by other sisters as they described receiving obediences. Although unrelated to my

research questions, experiences similar to the one described above were commonplace among

my respondents.

During the time period under consideration, it was common for schools to be staffed

based on need. Superiors were responsible for appointing young sisters to particular schools and

grade levels. Superiors were also free to change teaching sisters' building and classroom

assignments with little or no notice. The OSFs, like other congregations, received teaching

assignments in obediences notifying them of teaching placements. Sara stated:

In those days, the general superior would come over to the novitiate and we'd all be

waiting, wondering where we would be assigned because Mother had this long list. She'd

read the name and say where we were going.

Similar practices were recalled by Chloe, a CSJ, who entered in 1953:

We received our placement after the provincial and her assistant and maybe the council

sat down and made changes. In June, they would make out a change list and send it to the

convents.

I include these statements because it is important to understand how schools were staffed and,

more importantly, the processes that resulted in staffing decisions and the need for mentoring.

Because placements were made to reflect the needs and demands of schools, respondents

said the changes were hard for them to deal with. Neither their personal nor instructional needs

precipitated placements or rearrangements. As a result, they felt unprepared and frustrated. The general lack of preparation was mentioned several times by respondents across congregations. A sister who entered between 1940-1965 and who participated in the IHM focus group, discussed the rationale, or lack thereof, for some assignments:

> I had been teaching first grade for nine years. The principal, who was also superior, came to my door at 7:00pm on a Sunday evening and said, 'You'll be the eighth-grade teacher for the rest of the year starting in the morning.'

My notes indicate that this participant shook her head side to side and held her hands in the air as she shared her experience. She said that going from first grade to eighth grade, overnight, with no time to prepare psychologically or professionally was frustrating and terrifying. When I asked others in the focus group about dealing with this type of adversity, several respondents replied, "In those days, we did what we were told." Furthermore, my observer notes indicate that all sisters in the room physically nodded in agreement, suggesting they had similar experiences.

As earlier sections of this dissertation note, congregations valued reputations. As such, they were aware that fulfilling professional obligations in schools required that sisters be prepared to plan lessons, instruct pupils and manage classroom behavior. This was problematic because the demand for teachers was so great that young sisters were frequently sent on mission before this professional expertise were developed.

For some women, congregational life was ideal for creating time and space for mentoring. Sisters in my study mentioned having relationships built on trust and companionship. As part of this, they engaged in dialogue and problem solving aimed at improving classroom management and teaching skills. Although these actions were essential and contributed to their teaching proficiencies, many suggested these practices were so commonplace that they were

informally structured and taken for granted. Informality, in fact, was the hallmark of teacher formation throughout this early period.

Relationship Development and Mentoring

Among the congregations I studied, I found that sisters supported each other's development as teachers. Sisters developed personal relationships and engaged in mentoring because they cared deeply about one another and their ministries. The relationships that sisters developed, despite congregational rules and restrictions, are critical to understand because relationship development is an inherent component of mentoring. In the following statement, Charlotte, a CSJ who entered in 1950, discussed her friendship with another sister. The sister provides the context for what we would consider peer-to-peer support:

> I stayed at the old provincial house. The house was divided with the older nuns and us. We did not gather between the two. At that time, my chore was to clean the provincial's bedroom. I got in trouble doing that! It was funny for me.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that?

> The two of us [participant and her friend] should never have been assigned to clean together because we liked each other. She was a senior and I was a junior novice. We tried to get the news, and the provincial always had a newspaper delivered to her room. One of us would sit on the bed, feet up, and read aloud. I said, 'you're never going to believe what's happening in Korea!' One day the provincial walked in and we got in trouble. We realized that we went to school with those kids in Korea. They died there. It was hidden from us.

This statement suggests that, despite restrictions on socializing, the women themselves sought out ways to engage with one another and ultimately developed trusting friendships. Charlotte

said that having a friend to talk to about Korea was helpful to her especially considering both women knew men who were killed in the war. Although sisters were expected to seek quiet they did not always adhere to those expectations. Their defiance of these rules actually facilitated informal networks of support. Although she entered later, Susie, an OSF who entered in 1960, spoke about the friendship she developed with another novice who also entered in 1960. In addition to being close friends, they planned together and informally helped one another in their professional work through peer-to-peer support. I share this to emphasize that the relationship described by Charlotte was not isolated to the CSJs; rather, informal networks of support provided by friends were also discussed by others.

The preceding sections indicate that teaching sisters in the 1940s-1950s supported each other's professional development primarily through informal networks of support. Teaching sisters engaged in co-planning, shared resources including instructional materials and manuals, and provided feedback to one another. These constructs are representative of mentoring and its use as an informal method of sister teacher professional development. Sisters turned to each other for personal support and comfort and, therefore, it is not surprising that they also helped each other in the classroom.

Mentoring Time

In the 1940s-1950s, mentoring played a significant role in the development of teaching sisters' skills and professional repertoires. Mentoring and collaboration provided a framework for sisters' learning and weekends provided time for weekly school preparation. Sisters worked in schools during the day, collaborated on Saturdays and Sundays, and engaged in on-the-job training in between. Sometimes sisters listened outside of one another's classrooms, observed from the hallway or met after school. Across all congregations I researched, sisters mentioned

that weekends were important because sisters had time to work together to plan lessons, offer suggestions, and to provide emotional support to one another. In addition to working in pairs and/or small groups, weekend sessions sometimes consisted of organized workshops facilitated and administered by congregations. Cindy, a CSJ who entered in 1949, provided this example of weekend mentoring practices:

> We had a sister who met with us every Saturday morning. We would plan all our lessons. She would help us plan our lessons, tell us exactly what to do, direct us in classroom management, like 'Don't let the kids surround your desk, take them one row at a time,' that kind of thing.

Faye, a CSSF who entered in 1951, compared her experience with parochial school teaching to the experiences of the laity in public schools:

> Sunday was always the day of preparation. After school, we went home. You see that is a different kind of situation than you would have normally as a public-school teacher. We had all the time to prepare for the children. We stayed in school, we corrected their papers, and did things. I had some kids I tutored after school. Then we had our prayers and supper. In community life, we all gathered together. We read educational journals. There were 23 of us living in the convent at the time and we were all teachers.

She explains that, unlike secular teachers, who have other responsibilities, nearly all of her time was spent in preparing for teaching apostolate. As with Cindy and Faye, Imelda, an IHM who entered in 1949, felt that living together in the convent community was helpful for developing teaching skills. This reinforces the notion that convent life nurtured and supported mentoring practices.

As previously noted, congregations constructed time for weekend mentoring sessions. My respondents stated that sisters allocated time on Saturday or Sunday afternoons and/or evenings to co-plan and work together. When asked for specific examples illustrating how this time was spent, they recalled discussing lesson objectives, instructional delivery, and creating assessments. They also shared classroom management strategies. Sisters also recalled discussing the use of physical space in classrooms including desk arrangement, location of instructional materials, billboard content and other ornamental displays. Across interviews and congregations, sisters felt that sharing their thoughts and ideas was helpful to their professional growth and development and it was apparent that sisters benefited from the collegial support provided. Even with this support, sisters mentioned experiencing challenges with instruction. For example, there were times when a sister moved through her lesson plan quickly, leaving her with nothing left to teach. An IHM sister who entered in 1956 said:

> On Sunday, we did all our lessons for the week. It would be Wednesday and you had
>
> taught everything. Or, it was noontime and you had covered the whole day's lessons.

This example is commonplace in schools. Teacher preparation programs suggest it is better to over-plan than to be unprepared. Contemporary practitioners in pre-service teacher education field placements learn to prepare extra material early, unlike participants I interviewed who mentioned acquiring these skills on-the-job.

Sharing Resources

In addition to weekend mentoring sessions, sisters discussed the usefulness of shared resources. Some sisters used booklets or notebooks as a resource for teaching; they recorded lesson ideas, content information, instructional strategies within them. It is my understanding from sisters I interviewed that these were sometimes very detailed while others contained fewer

details. Sisters remarked that when they took over a grade level or class, the former sister sometimes passed along her notebook to the new teacher. Cindy, a CSJ who entered in 1949, provides another example:

> I was teaching math in high school, and I had a wonderful teacher who told me exactly what to do. She kept a notebook of all her little secrets and her tricks. She guided me in the journey. She kept all the papers, so I knew exactly what I was doing. I had no degree at the time, but that was the system.

As part of the context for this discussion, mentoring was needed because, in lieu of professional preparation and/or college education, sisters relied on other resources for help. This included teaching manuals, booklets, notebooks, and one another. If a new teacher was fortunate enough to receive a manual with explicit instruction in how to teach, deliver content, manage student behavior, etc., it could be considered a benefit. In this context then, the transfer of a manual from an experienced teacher to a less experienced teacher is a form of mentoring. Some sisters stated that access to manuals or teacher's editions of textbooks was inconsistent. Some sisters recalled having them and others did not. When asked about the manuals, Iowa, an IHM sister who entered in 1946, explained:

> The principal, often with the input from the teachers themselves, would select and purchase the textbooks. In a reading teacher's manual, there would be extensive sample questions that a teacher could ask students about the story. There might be suggested activities for the teacher to have students engage in after reading the story or games and puzzles. These were all teacher 'aids' in instruction. A creative teacher may launch her own ideas in just reading the suggestions: others might use the samples verbatim.

As Sister Iowa states, manuals are instructional guides that are intended to be helpful for new teachers. My participants noted that when manuals were available, they were often incomplete or lacked necessary materials. At the IHM focus group held on February 21, 2013, Sisters Indira, Ivory, Iris, and India, all who entered in 1956, said, "Manuals weren't that thought out" and "We didn't all have manuals." These statements suggest that there were inconsistencies with securing manuals and attesting to their completeness. Inconsistencies with manuals continued throughout the time period under consideration. Some sisters did not have any manuals to work from:

Sisters without manuals were at a distinct disadvantage. Manuals contained pertinent information to help sisters with daily instruction. To fill deficit areas, sisters engaged in self-teaching and peer-to-peer support to be successful. Many respondents said manuals helped them to self-teach content with the goal of staying a day or two ahead of the students. In the following statement provided by Susie, an OSF who entered in 1960, both peer-to-peer support and teachers' reliance on manuals and notebooks is evident:

> I had no teacher training. In the beginning, it was reading the manuals. Day by day, it was reading the manual. Then saying 'OK, this is how I teach my class.' So, it was kind of like on-the-job training.

My respondents recalled reading through manuals, synthesizing the information and planning and delivering daily lessons according to manual directives/suggestions. Chloe, a CSJ who entered in 1953, said:

> I remember once when a math teacher was out sick for a period of time. We didn't know the meaning of the word substitute teacher. We didn't hire anybody. We just filled in. I

was asked to teach algebra. I was one chapter ahead of the students, so I was studying the

night before and presenting it the next day. It was pretty basic, pretty simple.

Chloe suggests that substitute teachers were not commonplace in her experience. When an

algebra teacher became ill, she was sent to replace her without experience in math education. She

relied on the support of others throughout the experience. When asked about her experience with

instructional materials, Faye, a CSSF who entered in 1951, said:

In second year novitiate, we were not taking college classes. We had classes from our

school director at that point. One day she came with a briefcase. I'll never forget this. I

got a briefcase filled with the teacher manuals; like about a month or two before going

out, I was told, 'You might want to look at this and start planning (laughing).' So I did.

Having a collection of instructional materials delivered without sequence or suggestions for use

is disconcerting. This speaks to the necessity of mentoring for providing teachers with support.

In conclusion, sisters felt that when manuals were available and complete, they were

beneficial for planning lessons and providing teaching strategies. Some teachers exercised due

diligence with their care and maintenance and even included written notes intended for the next

teacher in succession. The problem with manuals was accessibility and completeness. Not all

instructors treated them with the same degree of care and some teachers did not have them at all.

In their absence, sisters had to rely on one another.

Mentoring Models

The teaching sisters in my study engaged in a variety of mentoring models, including

collaborative/co-teaching, demonstration teaching, and peer-to-peer support to help induct new

entrants to the teaching profession. As Keating and Traviss (2001) note, "as colleagues, [sisters]

shared and prepared together" (p. 18). The very nature of religious life lent itself to mentoring as

a form of professional formation. Living and working in close proximity and forming relationships such as those discussed in this dissertation would naturally involve mentoring. Mentoring was an inherent component in how women nurtured and harnessed personal and professional relationships over time.

Because of their close proximity to one another, parochial schools and convents were ideal spaces for mentoring to occur. My participants suggested that location was significant in the development of formal and informal networks of support because of increased accessibility to personal and professional resources. In urban settings in particular, families often resided within the vicinity of the parish church. Living and working in such close proximity with parish schools and families provided sisters with familial and institutional knowledge that they shared with each other. Sisters in my study mentioned that often there was an elder sister in the convent who had either taught another member of the same family or knew someone who did. If this was the case, sisters were able to seek out those who had family specific information and whose advice could potentially aid newer teaching sisters. When confronted by challenging student behavior, academic concerns, or familial issues, new entrants sought out more experienced sisters for advice or suggestions. The close living and working situations, and the very nature of religious life, created spaces for sisters to engage in mentoring practices. Below I provide specific examples from IHM and CSJ interviews relative to the convent being an ideal space for dialogue and teacher preparation. In their experience, when challenges developed, these sisters recalled engaging in meaningful discussions in the convent in the evenings. Sister Isla, an IHM who entered in 1962, said, "After dinner, we could always ask questions about problems we were having or get help." Across interviews, the IHMs made specific reference to the dinner table. Sisters explained that dinner began with prayer, followed by silence. After dinner, sisters were

free to work on lessons, collaborate, and provide support to one another. These informal

mentoring structures are distinctly related to improving teaching practices. Unlike the IHMs who

had silent dinners followed by evening discussions, Chloe, who entered the CSJs in 1953,

recalled the dinner hour as providing a time for problem solving and advice seeking, as noted

below:

> We would express the difficulties we were having, with academics or with behavior and
>
> always, another sister, older, wiser would offer suggestions. We would then implement
>
> the recommended suggestions and the following evening's discussion would be centered
>
> on how the intervention went. We talked at the dinner table, or we planned together in the
>
> evening, always getting feedback from more advanced professionals.

Both cases are illustrative of sisters offering and receiving support. These narratives affirm that

the convent provided an ideal space and opportunity for mentoring to occur. Moreover, these

were not formal strictures; rather, as the narratives suggest, these practices were organic and

unscheduled. Yet, sisters recall this time being inherently important to their development of

teaching practices.

In the following statement, Susie, an OSF who entered in 1960, discussed how peer

relationships supported informal mentoring and provided her comfort, guidance and

encouragement. This example is specific to this congregation and references this participant's

individual experience. This narrative provides an example of how informal mentoring networks

were used in this congregation. This sister discussed her friendship and experience with peer-to-

peer mentoring:

> We didn't have any instruction on how to teach or anything; no guidelines or practicum
>
> classes on how to write a lesson plan. We just dove right in and did it (laughing). I went

into my 3ʳᵈ grade classroom and pulled all these books out of the teacher's desk. We had

between 50 and 60 kids at the time and I had a book in the teacher's desk for every single

one of those desks in that room. I remember I just laid them all out. All of a sudden, I was

yelling, 'Sister X please help me!' I didn't know what I was supposed to do as far as the

books and the manuals, so we worked it out together. Of course, she had her own things

to deal with, but we relied on each other and helped each other.

This statement is demonstrative of informal, peer mentoring models commonly used by sisters.

The model was informal, developed out of sheer necessity and required little more than a trusting

peer or friend for support.

Teaching congregations valued their reputations as teachers. To keep reputations intact,

congregations sought to ensure that new entrants were as proficient as possible. As noted earlier,

the association between teacher quality and congregational reputations was evident in the Early

20ᵗʰ Century, as referenced by Burns (1912). All participants in my study mentioned receiving

help from other sisters and recalled offering help. The following examples are demonstrative of

informal networks of support aimed at improving teacher proficiencies and maintaining

congregational reputations for excellence. Ingrid, an IHM sister who entered in 1960, said:

[Of mentoring] There wasn't anything written down, but the sisters just did it. We were

all educators across community, but as religious we knew we needed to help our sisters in

community. It was a combination of our religious training but also that we were known

for having good schools. So, people helped us be successful.

This statement illustrates the absence of formal programs that might dictate how support was to

be offered or received. Rather, the emphasis here rests on the notion that sisters assumed they

were to offer support as part of their responsibility to one another and to the congregation. This was not isolated to the IHMs, however. Chloe, who entered the CSJs in 1953, said:

> We lived together. We were at seminary together. People [elder sisters] had empathy for sisters just coming out. They [elder sisters] would seek you out. You didn't have to go around and beg people to help you. They would seek out the young and say, 'You know, I would be glad to help you if you want to work on this.'

This is another example highlighting the expected nature of offering and receiving support. The need for help was assumed and inevitably provided.

Sister Teacher Formation 1950s – 1960s: Sister Formation Conference and the Juniorate

The ways sisters experienced mentoring was largely dependent upon the time of entrance and the congregation the entered. In all congregations studied for this project, initial sister formation consisted of a postulancy and a novitiate. The postulancy typically lasted six months to one year and was followed by a one or two-year novitiate. The first year of novitiate was also the canonical year, dedicated to spiritual formation and acclimation to religious life. The women who experienced a two-year novitiate recalled taking secular courses, or courses closely associated with a liberal arts degree in the second year. Influences such as the Sister Formation Conference (SFC) affected the professional formation of sisters. Some sisters entering later participated in a five-year formation period. In the following sections I consider mentoring and professional formation in a chronological format to addresses how sister support changed over time.

Although congregations and colleges were beginning to sponsor formal professional development, sisters were still actively mentoring one another in the schools well into the 1950s. Because congregations in the 1950s were also operating under rules of silence at night and

attempted to restrict close friendships, mentoring time was tricky. The participants I interviewed

for this study recalled and discussed silence as it related to their individual experiences. Because

they were expected to be silent, they used creative methods to help each other. Charlotte, who

entered the CSJs in 1950, said:

> We were basically semi-silent and didn't have an awful lot of time for exchange. In the
>
> classroom next to me, was one of my best friends. She was in her classroom teaching her
>
> lesson and I was in mine. She passed a note through a hole in the wall (we would
>
> frequently pass notes to each other). It said, 'See me in the hall.' She said, 'In my lesson
>
> yesterday, I was talking about 'President Puchanan' and a kid came in today and he told
>
> me he ran his history assignment by his father last night. The father said the president's
>
> name was 'Buchanan.' I told the kid, of course it is. I was using the French
>
> pronunciation.'

In this statement, Charlotte describes the content limitations young teachers faced. She also

discusses the rationale for the exchange of notes between sisters. Charlotte explained to me that

notes were exchanged because sisters were not supposed to speak to one another unnecessarily.

This was her explanation for passing notes to one another through the wall. In another example,

Ingrid, an IHM who entered in 1960, said:

> Sister X. was professed one day and sent out two days later. She didn't know how to
>
> teach music, so another sister helped her. The sister helping said, 'Open your door and
>
> listen. I will be teaching it. Listen to me; then you do it later. Or, I'll send some kid over
>
> to your class to lead the session.'

Ingrid was explaining the difficulties faced by a new sister charged with teaching music.

Unfortunately, their teaching schedules were busy and they had limited time for teacher

collaboration and/or peer observation during the day. The creative solution was for the master teacher to lead the music lesson. The less experienced teacher was directed to keep her classroom door ajar and to listen carefully to the master teacher. Later, the less experienced teacher was expected to mimic or model the actions of the master teacher with her own students. As this statement indicates, these two sisters also used student demonstrations for professional development. The master teacher led lessons with her own students. She would then select a student ambassador to visit another classroom and demonstrate the master teacher's lesson to peers. Students thought this was for their benefit; however, it was a carefully crafted method devised so the inexperienced teacher could learn how the master teacher delivered music lessons. Open doors were also used by the CSSF, as depicted in the following statement by Felicity who entered in 1961:

> When we got to the parish, we did have someone helping us. Another sister [with more experience] was with me and we would sit together in the evenings and write our lesson plans. I always taught with my door open. When she would take her classes for recess, she would stand at my door to listen to me teach (laughing). If she saw that I wasn't handling something the right way, we would talk about it.

In interviews with sisters sharing narratives about note passing and open-door stories, I learned that these strategies were secretive methods. My respondents suggested these methods were carefully constructed to support deficit areas, and sisters were careful not to let students or families become aware of these activities. When asked about this, sisters expressed concern that students might take advantage of these situations and parents might lose faith in the sister's ability to teach their children.

Respondents who entered in the 1950s frequently mentioned that working with peers on Saturdays and Sundays and on weekday evenings provided meaningful peer-to-peer support. Florence, who entered the CSSFs in 1950, recalled, "receiving help in the evenings when there was community time together." Other interviews suggest that peers also provided on-the-job training and support during the day in the schools. Courtney, who entered the CSJs in 1955, said:

> In 1958, I taught seventh grade. My mentor was a seventh-grade teacher. Every Sunday, for approximately two to three hours, we went over the week's work. She would advise me on classroom management, specifics of the course, and discussed any problems I might have. She was there for me the whole academic year.

In this scenario, both teachers were assigned to the same grade level. One of the teachers had experience and met weekly with the new teacher. These weekly meetings helped guide the new teacher throughout the entire first year in her 7ᵗʰ grade placement. Most importantly, peer support is evident across interviews and across congregations. Respondents consistently recalled offering and receiving help.

Sister Formation

In the 1950s-1960s, formal programs aimed at increasing the level of professionalization of teaching sisters expanded. The following section considers sister formation and formal networks of support and aligns with my second research question, "What do teaching sisters' oral histories reveal about how formal and informal networks supported their development of these skills?"

As discussed earlier, the *Sister Formation Bulletin* published regional and national formation activities and sample formation programs in the 1950s-1960s that helped promote and facilitate inter-congregational professional development. It is important to note that there were

no formal directives mandating congregations participate in any SFC activities or programming. Involvement was at the discretion of the individual congregations. Therefore, the degree to which congregations became involved with the SFC varied across congregations and certainly among those I studied; furthermore, the time of policy change and/or implementation varied significantly across these four congregations. The CSJs and IHMs became highly involved and enacted SFC recommendations in their formation programs while others, including the CSSFs and the OSFs, participated to a lesser extent. Sisters in focus groups and individual interviews recalled receiving the *Bulletin* and reading about formation seminars and workshops. Seminars and workshops were offered by a variety of organizations, including congregations, colleges and universities, diocesan offices and, in some cases, local school districts. In addition to refining and developing teachers' skills, seminars aimed to promote collegiality and collaboration within and among congregations. The fact that the *Bulletin* was the designated source for this sharing further signifies its importance to the professionalization of teaching sisters.

The establishment of the Sister Formation Conference (SFC) under the NCEA in April 1954 (*Bulletin*, 1954, p. 1) changed the lives of some teaching sisters because it formally called for an increase in the level of education attained by women religious. Unlike earlier, when mentoring was nearly the only vehicle for teacher preparation, the SFC provided additional options for professional development. As sisters acquired professional skills, the direct one-to-one support of a mentor was no longer required to the same degree it had once been. Respondents entering in these years recalled mentoring practices, but they referred to educational facilitators and/or coordinators as mentors. Although some congregations had facilitators of education in place for some time, these positions became more commonplace and uniform after the SFC. As these positions became regularly situated within and among congregations,

mentoring became less personalized and more organizationally structured. My respondents suggested that the consistent appointment of educational facilitators/coordinators reflected some of the changes influenced by the SFC. Ingrid, who entered the IHM congregation in 1960, stated:

> Sister X was in charge of education at that time and she organized things. She had all the workshops, and she would have been a formalized form of mentoring. She was way ahead of her time. She and Sr. Mary Emil were very friendly. We implemented the sister formation program the way Sister Mary Emil envisioned it.

Other respondents recalled similar circumstances and clearly referred to specific sisters by name as they described educational facilitators and coordinators.

Sisters responsible for coordinating or organizing the professional development of teaching sisters had a variety of titles, including facilitators, coordinators, educational directors of education, among others. They were responsible for coordinating, organizing and facilitating teacher training. Ivy, who entered the IHMs in 1960 recalled the following:

> My first year, we had Sister X, she was wonderful. She was superior, and principal at the high school and of the grade school. She said, 'Connect with Sister X for your art; connect with Sister X for world cultures.' And I was on my own for everything else.

In the following statement, Ivy explained that because her direct supervisor was too busy to conduct in-person observations the principal listened in on classroom lessons using the office to classroom intercom. Later, the principal provided feedback to Ivy based on what she overheard happening via the intercom. See below:

> My superior and principal said, 'I am not going to have time to come in and supervise you. Connect with Sister X. for your art and Sister X. for World Cultures. I am going to turn on the intercom so I can hear you teach.'

Although this principal connected Ivy with other more experienced sisters, the limitation of this model included Ivy's inability to discuss how this practice helped inform her teaching. This narrative does however suggest that this congregation was using facilitators to organize professional development.

Another change implemented involved practice teaching. Across congregations, sisters entering later in the period under consideration mentioned having experiences with practice teaching. Cynthia, who entered the CSJs in 1960, said:

> At that time, we had to be state certified. My first six months in the classroom were practice teaching. The superior would come and observe us and then we would have sisters from our community come observe us. The superior would write a letter saying I had completed six months of teaching in school and that I was ready to teach.

> These examples indicate that the level of professionalization in teaching congregations was increasing throughout the 1950s-1960s, but elements of informal mentoring persisted. As part of the rise of professionalization, in these four congregations, positions were either created or expanded to support beginning teachers. Also, practicum-teaching placements, (student teaching) under the direct supervision of experienced supervisors, were increasingly endorsed. This is not to suggest that practicum-teaching placements were uncommon or nonexistent prior to the SFC. Respondents suggested that a commitment to their becoming institutionalized, became markedly more evident and commonplace after the SFC was established. Although these supervisors fulfilled the role of "mentor," it was clear from participants that the mentorship was changing.

The Juniorate

Several congregations in the 1950s through the 1960s extended their formation period. Later entrants– those entering in the late 1950s-1960s or later– may have experienced a five-year formation period. Five-year professional formation programs included a postulancy and a two-year novitiate; however, they were extended to include two additional years of study. During the final two years, sisters were kept back from missions and the teaching apostolate to complete bachelor's degrees in teaching. Some IHMs referred to these as "junior professed, abbreviated in interviews simply as "juniors." Other IHMs called these women "juniorates" even though the term technically referred to the period of preparation, not the persons engaged in it. The CSJs referred to participants entering under these formation programs as juniorates as well. Neither the OSFs and CSSFs had juniorate programs as discussed below. Overall, during my oral history interviews sisters consistently referred to themselves as juniorates; therefore, I also use this term when referencing women who experienced a five-year professional formation experience.

Juniorates and sisters who entered earlier (before juniorates were customary), overwhelmingly agreed that the five-year formation experience resulted in extraordinary but necessary change. Juniorate programs also seem to have had a lasting impact on individual sisters and congregations. For example, juniorates recalled feeling well prepared for the classroom and they expressed satisfaction with both spiritual and professional formation. Juniorates may have had mentors, but the degree to which they relied on their mentors was quite different compared to sisters who entered earlier. Those who began as juniorates did not recall relying and/or depending on other sisters for close mentoring support. They may have engaged with mentors assigned at the organizational level, but there was little mention of the one-on-one relationships that were so prevalent in data sets of women who entered earlier. Cindy, who

entered the CSJs in 1949 and who did not herself undergo the Juniorate, said, "The juniorate really trained people."

Juniorates were organized programs that held women back from mission in schools until they had completed their first degree. According to archival documents (discussed in later sections), Juniorates also participated in practice teaching under the supervision of an educational leader. Therefore, juniorates were likely to be degreed and possess professional experience before assuming teaching positions. This was a major shift in the professionalization of teaching practices.

Some respondents in my study, who entered religious life before juniorates were started, entered the apostolate lacking skills and professional proficiencies; they were forced to rely on mentoring and on-the-job training. When asked how her experiences compared with those of sisters who entered earlier, Ingrid, who entered the IHMs in 1960, said:

> Younger sisters I lived with were lucky [being kept back]. I thought, 'They didn't go
> through what I went through. I was, the night before, going through manuals and was two
> pages ahead of the kids.'

Ingrid believes that juniorates in her congregation benefited from being held back. Juniorates had education and training that sisters who entered earlier simply did not have. She feels that because they were professionally prepared, the juniorates did not have to rely on evening and weekend planning sessions or manuals to teach. Charlotte, who entered the CSJs in 1950, said:

> After Vatican II, nobody went into the classroom that did not have a degree. Our major
> superiors met and said, 'This is the route we're taking: we are going to professionally
> train our women before they walk into those classrooms.' The sisters I am living with

now never went through what I did. They were educated appropriately. They were

juniorates.

Charlotte's perspective is that superiors took a strong and active stance to protect sisters entering

after Vatican II. Superiors aimed to provide education and training to new teachers through the

juniorate. The model of formation she experienced was challenging and she believes that later

entrants benefited from attending the juniorate.

Some respondents said that creating juniorates was not an easy task. Holding women

back for more complete spiritual and professional formation experiences limited the number of

women available to teach in schools. As a result, schools had to hire secular personnel, which

was costly to parishes. Establishing juniorates resulted in complications for some congregational

superiors, as represented in this statement by Ivory, who entered the IHMs in 1956:

> I remember Mother standing up and telling us we were all organizing and that she had to
> fend off pastors who were coming after her. She said, 'They [male clergy] don't care if
> you're degreed or if you've finished kindergarten. So long as you have a habit and are a
> sister, they want you in third grade.' She really had to stand her ground. She got that from
> Sister Mary Emil because the Monroe IHMs had already gone through this. It was very
> hard saying no to these bishops and pastors, but Mother said, 'Give us two years and we
> will send you a more qualified teacher.' That was the whole idea: formation for religious
> life and education.

In the following statement, Ivy, who entered the IHM community in 1960, described her

experience in the juniorate:

I entered September, 1960. We knew we would be in formation for five years. Three

years would be primarily theological formation and, in the last two, we would be going to

college.

Women entering congregations in the 1960s with established juniorate programs could expect to

enter juniorate programs. Part of that expectation included attending the colleges administered by

the congregations and completing degrees before entering the classroom.

Not all congregations had juniorates, however. Although the CSJs and IHMs had

juniorates, neither the OSFs nor the CSSFs that I studied did. Congregations that enacted

juniorate programs provide the most comprehensive evidence of participation in the

formalization of teaching practices instructed by the SFC. The OSFs interviewed for this study

had reportedly different experiences than the CSJs and IHMs; and, given the limited number of

respondents, the findings are limited to their personal accounts. The OSFs I interviewed did not

attend a four-year college administered by their congregation because both entered before the

OSFs began administering a four-year college. Archival records secured from the OSFs state, "If

we receive our Charter for the four-year College and the approval of His Excellency, it will be

possible for the first group to go out in September 1965 with a Bachelor Degree" (General

Chapter Third Franciscan Order, M.C. August 19-21, 1959). Both did affirm having received an

associate's degree from Maria Regina College, after which their professional formation varied.

When asked when, and if, their congregations entered/participated in the SFC, participants were

unclear on the time of entry or the level of commitment to it. Sara, an OSF who entered in 1943,

responded:

I entered in the 1940s. We used to get an associate's degree at Maria Regina College,

formerly known as St. Francis Normal School which was sufficient even for the public

schools. I taught 1ˢᵗ and 2ⁿᵈ grade then; in the summer, we took courses to lead to a

bachelor's degree. Most of us got a bachelor's degree in education.

Sara entered in the 1943 and did eventually attain an advanced degree; however, she attended

several colleges and universities to do so. The relationships between congregations and colleges

were not an explicit part of my research; therefore, I am hesitant to draw specific conclusions. I

do however consider this topic in the section on implications for future research.

Superiors, sisters, and others recognized that congregations without four-year colleges

needed support to meet advanced criteria established by SFC and secular education. As

mentioned in the literature review, the *Bulletin* sought to bridge this gap by circulating

information pertaining to workshops and sessions open to all sisters across congregations. Ivy,

who entered the IHMs in 1960, said:

Congregations that had colleges were much more able and likely to implement SFC and

things than others.

Among my respondents, accessibility to higher education appeared to be a distinguishing factor

in CSSF formation. Participants recalled offering and providing help to one another but in

comparison to the CSJs and IHMs, it appears mentoring manifested itself differently. A

reasonable explanation for this involves geographic location. The CSSFs were located near many

Catholic colleges including Damon, Medaille, and Canisius. As such, respondents felt there was

no need for formal participation in the SFC including starting a juniorate. Because there were

numerous colleges nearby and accessible, CSSFs were enrolled in programs geared toward

completing teaching degrees and attaining state teaching certification. As they were already

enrolled in higher education, mentoring was neither the singular nor the primary method of

teacher preparation. This suggests that congregations with four-year colleges nearby were at an

advantage over others that lacked nearby colleges. Furthermore, there could also be an advantage to colleges that awarded four-year teaching degrees as opposed to two-year colleges awarding associate degrees. Four-year colleges and universities had resources available that two-year colleges lacked, including finances, instructors, additional course offerings, and more time to prepare for the professions. This may have enabled them to interface more fully with the SFC.

Classroom Management

Although juniorate programs and the SFC formalized professional formation to a significant degree interviews with juniorates reveal there remained a need for informal support especially in areas like classroom management. Throughout the time period under consideration respondents mentioned offering and receiving support for managing student behavior. Sisters had limited opportunities for practice and class sizes were extremely large, much larger than classes today. At times, teaching can feel like an isolated profession and nuns were alone in classrooms with a lot of children, which would not have been easy. Here I discuss some of the trials and tribulations individual respondents shared as a result of having limited opportunities for practice. Susie, an OSF who entered in 1960, recalls the following:

> I began teaching in March because an experienced teacher was being removed from the school and I was to fill in. It was traumatic (emphasis on traumatic). The classroom management was hard for me because all of a sudden, here you are, a young sister just put into this class.

In reflection, some classroom management stories offer humor, though at the time, they were likely not so funny. Inez, who entered the IHMs in 1957, said:

> I had a first and second grade in one classroom: 60 [students] in each class. I had a whole group of boys that ran away every morning after we saluted the flag outside. The priest would get in his car, drive around, pick them all up and bring them back.

My respondents recalled supporting one another's development in classroom management and organizational tasks as best they could. This was typically in the form of advice or verbal instructions. Ingrid, who entered the IHMs in 1960 said:

> When working with parents, don't say or use negative terms. Don't say lazy. Say 'she has difficulty getting this done.'

In her oral history interview, Ingrid indicated that she was confident in content and curriculum, but less secure with classroom management. This was the professional area she received help with. She went on to say:

> Older sisters would tell us what to do. They would say, "Don't raise your voice, stand there with a stern voice, turn the lights off, etc.

Ingrid mentioned that helping one another in community was assumed and stated that helping one another was related to congregational reputations for excellence. This was also noted in interviews with the CSSFs and CSJs, as seen below.

As with the OSFs and IHMs, the CSJs recalled having similar experiences. In the following, Cindy, who entered the CSJs in 1949, recalls similar experiences:

> I was told that when collecting milk money, do not let the children all come up at once. I was told to take the first row, then the second row. If youngsters were misbehaving, sisters told me not to raise my voice, just to stand over the youngster and say 'if you do that again, you will be out of this room' so that is what I did.

These examples provide an understanding of how sisters supported one another in learning how to restrict movement and manage classroom transitions.

Classroom management is an area that continued to require informal support despite the professionalization of teaching practices implemented by the juniorate and the SFC. College and university classrooms may have provided spaces for sisters to study theory and pedagogical methods, but the practical implementation of classroom management strategies required time and practice. As these examples suggest, sisters continued to rely on one another for advice and support after the establishment of formal professional formation programs.

State Teaching Credentials

Throughout the 1960s, the professionalization of teaching sisters continued to advance and sisters continued to improve their education and attain state teaching credentials. Participants stated practice teaching was a meaningful component of their professional formation. This practice was similar to contemporary student teaching models in that it met state requirements for certification and allowed opportunities for practice under the supervision of a more seasoned teacher. To be clear, during the time period in question parochial school teachers were not required by law to possess state teaching certification. I interviewed the former superintendent who led the Diocese of Syracuse schools during the time period under consideration. He said:

> In 1964, sisters teaching in high schools would have had academic credentials. In the
> elementary school, they could literally be fresh out of normal school.

The superintendent stated that diocesan supervisors, sisters that supervised teachers, were added across the diocese in the mid-to-late1960s.

In his article, "Teacher Certification in the United States: A Brief History," Anthony LaBue explains that a, "teaching certificate is an attempt to guarantee that teachers who teach in

the public schools are qualified to perform their duties," (1960, p. 147). LaBue adds to his argument, suggesting that teacher certification, "may be regarded as a protection to the teaching profession against unfair job competition from unethical, incompetent or improperly prepared teachers," (p. 148). In 1960, New York State required applicants for state teaching certification to have completed high school degrees and a minimum of five years of college preparation, within a specified number of years (LaBue, 1960). Respondents in my study, especially those who entered through juniorate programs, recalled having goals of attaining certification at rates that were commensurate with public school teachers. Practice teaching, mentioned earlier in this section, was an inherent component of meeting that certification criteria. The IHMs, CSJs, and CSSFs all had established educational directors in-community who conducted observations of new teachers and provided feedback. The OSFs interviewed did not recall having such a designee, and I was unable to access this information in their archives, given circumstances mentioned earlier. For those congregations that did have such a position, feedback and certification information was provided to teacher colleges and/or the state for certification. A sample of this process is described below by Cynthia, who entered the CSJs in 1960:

> The superior would come in and observe us. Then, we would have sisters from the community come in and observe us. Then, the superior would write a letter saying we had completed six months of practice teaching in school and we were ready [for certification].

According to respondents, after the formal observation, new teachers received feedback from the observer. Interviews suggest that sisters still supported one another by offering constructive criticism and support; however, by this time the practice of assigning specific supervisors to oversee one's student teaching was formalized and aligned with state certification

credentialing. Another substantial change that occurred in the 1960s involved the level of participation and input on behalf of the entrant. Unlike earlier decades, when women received obediences assigning them to a particular school or grade level, sisters in the 1960s took active part in such determinations. This is referenced below by Ingrid, an IHM:

> I entered in September 1960. The sisters in charge looked at our academic records and met with us and talked about what we wanted to do. Because of my records, they told me to go into social studies and I knew I would love to do that.

As congregations in the 1960s worked to formalize their teacher preparation programs and meet state certification criteria new functions and forms of mentoring took shape to reflect the changes in ideology and practice. This included demonstration-teaching models. Several participants mentioned "watching" others as a vehicle for learning. Observing was useful, particularly in periods of silence; sisters surveyed one another and then modeled the action and behaviors of more senior teachers.

The following statement represents the benefits of demonstration teaching. In this example, one teacher models while the other observes, later implementing similar approaches independently. Cynthia, a CSJ who entered in 1960, said:

> The first time I was observed by one of our sisters, who worked in the superintendent's office of the Catholic school, I froze right in the middle of a sentence while I was teaching. I had it all planned, but I just froze. She took right over and said to me, 'What would you like me to demonstrate for you?' I watched her. After that, I was fine.

The example above indicates that experienced teaching sisters assumed responsibility for working with and modeling for those sisters having less experience.

Some sisters I interviewed said the active process of advancement was menacing to some male orders, and they believed that well-educated sisters posed a threat to the male hierarchy. In the statement below, Isla, an IHM who entered in 1962, offers her perspective on this:

You have priests that are very threatened by us. We are educated and keep up with everything. They don't necessarily. We became a threat because we knew more and we open our mouths and say what we think. We have a hierarchical male problem, as usual in the church. Many priests are just afraid of the sisters. The sisters are very educated. Sisters make it their business to go to seminars, talks and to hear what's going on– to be productive for the church.

Although advancement and tensions with the male hierarchy were not directly related to my research questions, several respondents mentioned this. It was surprising to me how often they discussed experiencing conflict with the male clergy in a variety of areas, not just education. Pursuing this line of inquiry may be of interest to future researchers.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Although mentoring was a significant factor in the training and preparation of my participants, its role and significance changed dramatically during the time period covered by this study. In the 1940s and early 1950s, at a time when formalized professional programming was not readily available sisters I interviewed relied heavily on one another for professional support for the teaching apostolate. The support provided led to close personal relationships that fostered trust and interdependence. As this section illustrates, the congregations I studied actively sought to improve professional formation over time by coordinating and better organizing professional development, extending the duration and content of formation programs, meeting

state certification criteria, etc. Actions taken by congregations to improve teaching and

implement programmatic changes represent formal structures of support.

As congregations took responsibility for the professional development of sisters, they

disrupted earlier patterns of mentoring. As professional development became institutionalized, it

also became less personal. This impacted the intimate mentor and protégé relationships clearly

evident in early models. The combination of the SFC, the establishment of juniorate programs

and related initiatives, augmented the professionalization of practices for teaching sisters.

Creating formal programs that tended to the training and preparation of future teachers resulted

in a decreased reliance on mentoring.

To summarize, my findings indicate that sisters were providers and recipients of

mentoring support. Mentoring is traditionally framed as having more experienced, accomplished

teachers supporting less accomplished, often beginner teachers. This is certainly evident in

mentoring models in the 1940s-1950s. During this time, informal mentoring models were

commonplace, and mentoring aided in the professional development of teaching sisters. Sisters

shared resources, including teacher editions and manuals when available and offered their time

and expertise to less experienced teachers. However, changes precipitated by the SFC and

juniorate programs provided a sharp turning point in sister teacher formation. By the 1960s,

systems to professionally form teachers were in place. Respondents suggested that they still

required support in practical areas including classroom management, but the need for other forms

of professional support were neither pivotal nor critical. Generally, the 1960s appear to lack

distinctive mentoring models that sisters who entered earlier were able to speak so clearly about.

Rather, sisters who entered in the late 1950s and 1960s referenced formal programs established

by the SFC and the juniorate. Mentoring, although critical in the earlier years of my study was

ancillary when formal systems were put into place.

CHAPTER 5:

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Findings and Conclusions

My findings provide sufficient evidence to suggest that mentoring was a significant resource used to help teaching sisters develop professional skills. In this final chapter, I discuss my findings relative to each of the research questions included in this study.

My first research question which asks, "What do teaching sisters' oral histories reveal about their development of teaching skills?" An adequate answer to this question requires a chronological response. In the early years included in this study, interviews confirm that sisters in all four congregations relied on mentoring as a near exclusive form of preparation and development. Those sisters who were on the 20-year plan and participated in weekend and summer seminars placed heavier reliance on more experienced teachers and one another for content, curricular and pedagogical support. My findings add to earlier research conducted by Keating and Traviss who refer to this as a "teacher preparation model that was handed down from generation to generation of women religious who were committed to ideals of the education profession in the American Catholic school" (2001, p. 11). As discussed in earlier chapters, mentoring changed and a variety of models developed over time. This included demonstration teaching, various types of peer-to-peer support and pre-service teacher practice.

It is important to consider space as a construct in the development of mentoring practices. Convent living provided physical space and the structure of religious life ensured accessibility for mentoring models to be crafted and honed over time. It is important to understand that in the 1940s and early 1950s, mentoring arrangements were informally crafted and organically implemented. Approaching mentoring in this way was necessary primarily due to the lack of

formal programs in place. Furthermore, formal professional development programs that were "in place" consisted of workshops scheduled on weekends and in summers. Simply put, these workshops proved insufficient in providing the type of support necessary for teacher development.

In the latter part of the time period under consideration mentoring underwent significant change, especially for congregations that implemented juniorate programs. Juniorates shifted the emphasis and practices involved in sister teacher preparation. Whereas once sisters primarily learned from on the job training and from one another this shift changed the order of operations. Juniorates expected to be held back to: 1) learn in college and university classrooms 2) engage in practice teaching in elementary and secondary classrooms 3) have access to formal mentors/facilitators assigned by congregations. Of participants included in their study, Keating and Traviss write, "sisters suggested their on the job experiences were limited by the community's decision to stay out of the schools in order that the sister first get a degree in teaching. They saw that as a loss" (2001, p. 79). Keating and Traviss suggest that being held back to complete degrees prohibited teachers from aligning theory and practice (2001). Participants in my study did not recall feeling that way. Rather, my findings demonstrate that sisters felt that practice teaching, under the direct supervision of a more experienced person, was beneficial to their professional growth. Second, Keating and Traviss write, "sister-teachers learned far more from their own sisters than from college instructors later on as they earned degrees and completed their professional education" (2001, p. 48). This statement is also inconsistent with my findings. According to my participants, sisters who entered as juniorates felt that being held back to complete degrees was an example of best practice at the time. Also interesting, sisters that entered prior to the establishment of juniorates acknowledged their

significance and envied sisters who benefited from juniorate resources as part of their professional preparation. Third, Keating and Traviss claim that, "Underlying the commitment of the sisters was the belief that they could do everything. We had faith that what a Superior told us to do, we could do" (2001, p. 60). The idealized notion that faith was enough to ensure pedagogical success and occupational efficacy was inconsistent with my findings. As stated in chapter four, Ingrid, an IHM who entered in 1960, lived in convent with another sister who did not like teaching. Ingrid remembered the sister cried almost daily yelling, "I hate it. I hate it!" Despite the superior telling her she was good at teaching, she continued to be unhappy. The sister eventually left community. Ingrid equates her departure with disappointment/dissatisfaction with the teaching apostolate. Although I cannot generalize beyond the scope of my study, Ingrid's experience seems to contradict earlier research by Keating and Traviss.

My second research question asks, "What do teaching sisters' oral histories reveal about how formal and informal networks supported their development of these skills?" My findings indicate that the structure of convent life and communal living fostered the development and sustainability of mentoring systems. This was consistent and evident throughout the time period under consideration. The close proximity sisters had to one another, coupled with the structure of religious life, made mentoring possible. Sisters depended on each other for friendship, communication, and support. The convent and religious life nurtured mentoring relationships. Mentoring evolved organically because it was an effective tool given the parameters of religious life. Unlike the lay teachers in public schools, sisters did not have familial commitments, including spousal obligations and parenting responsibilities. My intention here is not to diminish the numerous responsibilities sisters did have as integral components of religious life. The relationships sisters formed led to helping one another with lesson planning, instruction, and in

other essential areas such as classroom management. This was also found in the work of Keating

and Traviss. They note, "The sisters had a stake in each other's competence and expertise: 'As a

community we were a family who passed down from generation to generation the skills of the

family'" (2011, p. 18). The notion of family is suggestive of the close personal connections

sisters had with one another, which are essential for mentoring. In the following, I address both

formal and informal networks of support used by the congregations I studied.

As noted in earlier work by Eby, mentoring practices can be flexible, distinctive, and

reflect the interest of those involved. Formal definitions do not always "encompass the many

forms of mentoring that may exist" (Eby, 1997, p. 127). My findings are demonstrative of these

variables and indicate that sisters used a variety of mentoring methods and models to develop

teaching skills. None of the congregations studied followed formal or prescriptive mentoring

models. Rather, they used a broad array of informal mentoring approaches that met their needs

and reflected the desires of those involved. Sometimes this involved demonstration teaching

whereby new teachers observed lessons taught by experienced teachers. Following the

demonstrations, new teachers were expected to implement observed strategies in their own

instruction. Peer mentoring was also common and broadly used. Sisters planned together, shared

resources, and engaged in post-teaching discussions that aimed to solve problems and

deconstruct challenges. Mentoring of teaching sisters reflects "grass root" structures rather than

formulated plans. In large part, mentoring appears to have operated outside of formal guidelines

and practices.

Mentoring is difficult to define operationally, and inconsistencies are referenced in the

literature (Healy & Welchert, 1990). Among the congregations I studied, I found that sisters

developed teaching skills by using mentoring models that were informal in nature and easily

modified and adapted to meet the needs of sisters in particular communities. The adaptability of

mentoring is what made it both practical and useful for the training of new teaching sisters.

Despite varying interpretations, most of the research on mentoring supports the notion that

"mentoring is differentiated work in that mentors determine and adjust their mentoring actions

based on what they know about their learners and what needs to be learned" (Schwille, 2008, p.

143). Some models are formally designed and implemented by agencies and organizations while

others develop informally. Of informal models, Healy and Welchert write, "it is dynamic, occurs

spontaneously between two people of good will and commitment, is long term, multifaceted and

potentially profound in impact" (1990, p. 18). Respondents mentioned embracing mentoring in

spontaneous and organic ways and attributed these systems of support to their professional

development. Being supported by colleagues and peers aided in the development of professional

practices (Raabe & Beehr, 2003).

     Mentoring was a vehicle for teacher development, utilized for congregational growth and

community identity formation. In addition to benefiting individual teachers, mentoring benefited

congregations overall. As the general literature on mentoring indicates, mentoring has the

potential to enhance organizational structures; this is particularly true in the context of religious

life. It was important to the sisters I interviewed that their congregations to be positively

perceived by their parish communities and in broader societal contexts. James Aloysius Burns

discussed this many years earlier, in 1912, in *Growth and Development of the Catholic School*

System in the United States. Burns suggested that to sustain the positive perception of lay

communities, teaching congregations had to produce effective teachers: "The spirit of a single

great teacher often passed to the entire community as an inheritance for all time" (Burns, 1912,

p. 25). Sisters I interviewed recalled individual teachers' abilities and/or deficits as reflective of

the congregation's overall abilities. Respondents suggested that value placed on positive reputations, demonstrative of excellence in parochial education, led to the emphasis placed on mentoring as a form of teacher development.

Mentoring systems aided congregations in securing favorable public recognition. To reinforce congregational/organizational structures, older sisters who had already adjusted to religious life and were adept at teaching mentored younger sisters. Teaching sisters also negotiated multiple identities. Young sisters likely looked to older sisters for spiritual, prayerful, and meditative guidance. While this helped foster a sense of community and spiritual identity sisters were simultaneously developing a professional identity. The sisters I interviewed genuinely wanted to be good teachers who were well respected by their communities. Therefore, developing and maintaining a positive reputation was imperative because it encompassed individual and communal importance.

Much of the research on mentoring considers the individual in relation to professional growth. Kram suggests that as personal learning increases, protégés gain independence and develop a strong sense of self-worth (1996). Respondents in my study recalled the collective identities teaching sisters developed that aligned with congregational charisms and reputations for academic excellence. This can be seen in the following statement by an educational leader as explained during her interview with me:

> In my perception, the IHMs were in pursuit of excellence in an education setting. In that
> setting, the pursuit of excellence is an indication of Catholic Identity.

Some of the congregations in my study had internal teacher stratification systems. For example, new sisters were typically placed in elementary classrooms where they were expected to develop their teaching skills with the youngest children. Afterward, those deemed proficient or "stronger"

were moved to high schools. The idea that anyone could teach small children was commonplace across the congregations I studied. Primary teaching was considered practice for secondary education. This is also noted in Rogers book, "All the young sisters started with the babies, and then when you were seasoned you went to the upper grades. The high school teachers were like queens" (2011, p. 7). Efforts were made to hone the craft of the individual teacher because entire congregations benefited from being positively perceived by parish communities. The desire to keep congregational reputations intact required they support one another's development as teachers.

My third and final research question was, "What do teaching sisters' reveal about how support evolved over time?" In previous sections, I provided data to illustrate how sisters experienced the phenomenon of mentoring. As noted throughout, their experiences with this phenomenon changed dramatically throughout the time period under consideration. Mentoring models went from being very hands-on and requiring a high degree of personal interaction (1940s-1950s) to being broader in scope and sequence. The SFC and establishment of the juniorates meant that sisters entering later would be degreed and have practice teaching experience before entering the teaching apostolate. They also engaged in professional development facilitated by formation directors or other administrative personnel. Interestingly, these sisters referred to formal formation directors as mentors. Although the models and actors changed significantly, sisters continued to associate their experiences with mentoring practices. Therefore, the ways sisters engaged in and experienced the phenomenon of mentoring was largely dependent on the time of entrance. My study answers this research question and adds to existing literature on mentoring in congregations because it illustrates that change was gradual and implemented at the discretion of individual religious institutes.

Many of the women interviewed for this project are among the last generation of women religious who served as mentors in the capacity outlined in this study. The inclusion of their voices is pivotal because as they age, there are fewer women left to share these rich and vivid experiences. In this project I wanted to give sisters the opportunity to share their experiences with mentoring and to acknowledge the contributions they made to American education.

Changes in sister formation programs promoted systemic and organizational change to the way sisters were professionally formed. After careful review of archival documents, it is evident that each of the four congregations included in this study implemented these changes at their discretion, over a period of time. For example, documents obtained from the OSF archive state, "Our aim is that the group of postulants who enter in September 1961 will be held back until they have finished their education at least to complete the Normal work and to earn the first Bachelor degree, if possible" (OSF General Chapter, August 19-21, 1959). The document goes on to explain that the plan is dependent upon a variety of factors, including the completion of a Charter for a four-year College and the construction of the building. According to the archivist of the CSJ Albany, New York Province, they established their juniorate program in 1958 at which time sisters were held back from mission to complete first degrees. The Scranton, Pennsylvania IHM Congregation– not to be confused with the Monroe, Michigan IHMs– also established their juniorate in 1958. Although the CSSFs did not have a formal juniorate, documents obtained in the archives state that, "teaching sisters take courses or attend workshops and conferences in the psychology of today's youth, in guidance, and in theology appropriate to their teaching level" (Proposals and Rationale Provincial Chapter, December 27-30, 1967). Documents also indicate that formal committees designated to sister formation were formalized in 1968.

When sisters discussed how they experienced the phenomenon of mentoring, they drew a clear distinction between those who entered before the SFC and juniorates and those who entered after they were established. As stated earlier, sisters who entered in the 1960s referred to formation directors/congregational administrators as mentors. In comparison, this was very different from sisters who entered in the 1940s-1950s, when mentoring was a primary source of professional development. Sisters entering earlier were capable of providing rich, robust narratives that described their personal experiences with mentoring. Women who entered in the 1960s did not have that ability. A distinct difference was that sisters entering in the 1960s did not reference the close personal relationships explicitly mentioned by women who entered in the 1940s-1950s. They lacked the ability to provide distinct, clear experiences with mentoring. They *felt* mentored in that there was a formation director who arranged professional development, provided feedback in post observation conferences, etc. They also referred to this person as a mentor; however, it was clear in the data that the role and the purpose of mentoring changed significantly over time. Mentoring did not disappear altogether, it just became more difficult to isolate in later data sets suggesting that as the professionalization of teaching practices increased, the significance of mentoring changed. Sisters who entered religious life earlier recalled having robust mentoring experiences because mentoring was the catalyst for professional formation in earlier years. It is possible that, as sisters became better educated and more professionally prepared, there was no well-defined role for professional or occupational mentoring. This helps explain why the powerful illustrations recalled from the 1940s and 1950s were less vivid among respondents entering later.

There are other reasons that explain why mentoring may have changed. Sisters entering in the 1960s mentioned being active participants in collective decision-making. Unlike sisters

who entered earlier, sisters in the 1960s conferred with congregational superiors to make educational and occupational choices. Some women entered directly into juniorate programs while others entered having already earned an associate's degree and/or bachelor's degree. Given these factors, the need for direct support from elder or more experienced sisters for teaching or professional support was no longer required to the same degree it had been in earlier years.

Additionally, the loss of vocations in the 1960s adversely affected mentoring systems in religious life. McGuinness (2013) writes, "Between 1948 and 1957, 34,448 women chose to enter a congregation; that figure dropped to 6,394 between 1966 and 1975, a decrease of 81 percent" (p. 174). McGuiness goes on to explain numerous factors that contributed to women leaving, including lack of vocation, dissatisfaction and marriage (2013). Although I did not explicitly pursue the impact of this mass departure on congregational life it was almost certainly significant. Departures meant that there were fewer sisters present to promote or maintain mentoring practices and fewer yet in need of mentoring.

My findings also suggest that attaining a degree had a notable impact on mentoring practices. Whereas, at one time mentoring was the substitute for professional training, in later years these practices were largely augmented by formal education. After participating in workshops, professional development sessions, and programs organized by SFC and the juniorate, sisters advanced their formal education, thus reducing their reliance on mentoring and other informal methods of professional and teacher education support.

The data for this project clearly substantiates the claim that mentoring was the primary form of professional development and preparedness for sisters entering the teaching apostolate in the 1940s-1950s. Although the professional mentoring of sister teachers changed, mentoring still played a significant role and fulfilled other needs for women religious. A matter mentioned by

nearly all sisters, regardless of time of entrance involved the relationship between teacher effectiveness and mentoring practices. When sisters discussed the challenges and hardships they faced, they nearly always accompanied those statements with further elicitations suggesting that they knew they would be helped. No participant in this study said, "I felt alone." Or, "I was abandoned." Sisters never felt alone because they were not alone. They were confident and knew someone with more knowledge or experience would provide help if and when it became necessary. And, this help was never far away. This is in direct contrast with Dan Lortie's point in *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*, in which he argues that, "throughout the long, formative decades of the modern public school system, schools were organized around teacher separation rather than teacher interdependence" (1975, p. 14). Public school teachers were assigned to instruct content specific categories at particular grade levels. Lortie goes on to explain that as these categorizations became increasingly more specialized, teachers were "expected to teach students stipulated knowledge and skills without assistance from others" (p. 15). This isolation and lack of connectivity can lead to loneliness. It is also an indicator of just how important mentoring could be and how much it distinguished mid-century parochial education from public school education. An important lesson to be learned from this research is that sisters recall becoming better at teaching because someone supported them.

Teaching is a profession that requires ongoing professional instruction and development. As depicted by the literature, teacher quality improves upon completion of a degree coupled with in-class time and practice (Good, et al., 2006). Teaching sisters relied on each other; moreover, they valued mentors and recognized the value mentoring played in their readiness and development. Beginning teachers benefit from the collaboration and cooperation of more experienced teachers and mentoring can be critical to their success. This is especially true for

those with initial struggles. My research indicates that careful, intentional support provided by master teachers is useful in guiding and facilitating new teachers, especially those who are not very strong in early career stages.

<div align="center">Limitations of this Study and Implications for Further Research</div>

Dissertations and advanced research projects are not without their limitations, and mine is no exception. I am only able to make assertions about mentoring relationships in these four congregations and cannot draw conclusions extending beyond the congregations I studied. Further research is necessary to advance our knowledge of mentoring and its significance, or lack thereof, in other congregations. Although I argue that generalizations across dioceses cannot be made, additional research conducted in other locations will garner useful information that might allow us to draw more thorough conclusions.

Framing the discussion within a specific time period, 1940-1965, also serves as a limitation. Such parameters limit opportunities to explore ideas that extend beyond the years identified. Research on the professional preparation and development of teaching sisters prior to the 1940s suggests that sisters were involved in continuing education programs that extended over several years. Given the lack of research on mentoring in congregations prior to the 1940s, it is difficult to know whether mentoring played a significant role in sister teacher preparation prior to the 1940s or if mentoring developed in response to the rapid growth of religious communities that began in the late 1940s and continued into the 1950s.

My project is not a dissertation on Vatican II, and I do not claim to be a scholar in this area; however, nearly all participants interviewed discussed changes associated with Vatican II, making it relevant to this discussion. Respondents indicated that Vatican II disrupted patterns of support readily evident in earlier years. Because of this, I feel obliged to document what sisters

shared particularly given its relevance to mentoring. Additionally, this is an area that I believe future researchers may wish to consider in further detail.

Vatican II changed the lives of Catholic sisters generally, not just those in teaching ministries. Of Vatican II, Kittel writes, "It explicitly gave sisters permission to experiment, to alter their rules temporarily so they might learn by trial and experience how to proceed" (2009, p. 34). Changes occurred in organizational structures, institutional management, formation experiences, manner of dress, education, and more. Nearly all participants interviewed mentioned Vatican II and its impact on their relationships with each other without me asking about it. They noted that drastic change caused confusion that was difficult to understand at times and disruptive to established practices nearly all of the time. Whereas it was once common for older sisters to help younger sisters acclimate to religious life and the teaching apostolate, after Vatican II this became obsolete. Sisters were entering religious life having undergone rigorous academic programs and extended formation periods. As a result of Vatican II, sisters began to rely on one another for different types of support and to help them through circumstances they had not confronted previously. This support was most commonly shared between sisters of the same age and/or in the same formation groups.

McGuinness writes, "Women religious responded to the changes taking place in both the Catholic Church and American society during the 1960s in a variety of ways" (2013, p. 166). One of the more *visible* changes associated with Vatican II included changes in personal appearance which McGuinness also notes writing, "The first major "outward" change concerned the clothing traditionally worn by women religious (2013, p. 166). Although I am not a scholar of the habit, or traditional religious clothing worn by sisters, nearly all of my participants

discussed the transition from the habit into lay or secular clothing and associated this transition with mentoring processes.

Sisters shared several anecdotes with me to explain the difficulties they faced as they negotiated and adapted to changes associated with personal appearance. Two areas that were particularly concerning for sisters included manner of dress and hair style. Sisters did not come out of the habit and immediately begin wearing lay clothing. Rather, this was a slow and complicated process and congregations took steps to adjust in ways that were most comfortable for them. For example, the CSJs I interviewed discussed what McGuinness calls the "modified or simplified habit" (McGuinness, 2013, p. 167). The modified habit was worn in the interim period by the CSJs as they were acclimating to change. They wore the modified habit after they stopped dressing in the full habit, yet prior to adopting lay clothing. Sisters explained that the modified habit was created from fabric retrieved from the old habit and was sewn by sisters themselves. Chloe, a participant who entered in 1953, recalled the modified habit with angst and said it was "ridiculous." When pushed to describe ridiculous, Chloe said with emphasis:

Well I'm no seamstress! (CSJ interview 4/29/14).

 Chloe felt the modified habit was awkward in appearance and explained she would have preferred transitioning directly into lay clothing. Another CSJ, Cynthia who entered in 1960 said:

We had to wear these funny dresses we made out of habits (CSJ Interview 6/25/14).

This reflection on the modified habit was common among CSJs I spoke with. During the CSJ focus group held on February 12, 2014 participants remembered that the *Bulletin* helped them adapt to change. The *Bulletin* contained useful and practical suggestions relative to manner of dress. The CSJs would assemble around a large table, read the *Bulletin* aloud and then discuss

what to wear, what not to wear, etc. This communal response was affirmed in individual interviews as well. Cynthia who entered in 1960 also said:

> I was showing another sister the *Sister Formation Bulletin* because there were actual sections on how to dress. She was cracking up because some women, especially those that preceded us, who were older had been wearing a habit for so long [they needed advice] on how to wear lay clothing. It had to be spelled out and we just had a big, old chuckle reading the information in the *Bulletin* (CSJ interview 6/25/14).

In addition to providing communal and individual support with clothing, sisters also helped each other by offering advice on hair. Respondents explained to me that prior to Vatican II head shaving or removing all strands of hair by shaving was commonplace and made accommodating the veil (worn as part of the habit) more comfortable. When sisters stopped wearing the veil they faced concerns about their hair. During the CSJ focus group, held on February 12, 2014 sisters explained that permanent hair styles (perms), were chemical processes that made the hair curly. Several CSJs wore the hairstyles and frequented the same hairdressers.

The choice to wear lay clothing was harder for some older members of the community, and not all members embraced changes in attire with the same vigor and tenacity. According to my participants, some older sisters were very resistant to these changes and were sometimes harsh and critical of younger sisters who embraced these changes. An IHM who entered in 1960 said that when she began wearing modest, professional clothing she was called a "tramp" by older sisters in convent.

In response to the SFC and Vatican II congregations revised formation programs and organizational structures. A shift readily discussed by participants involved the transition from hierarchical models of governance (obedience) to collegial governance models. My participants

suggested that the professionalization of practices led to internal and collective conflicts among some sisters, especially in the 1960s. Juniorates disrupted professional mentoring patterns that were readily identifiable in the 1940s and 1950s when older, more experienced sisters held the most knowledge and provided support to beginning teachers. This changed because women coming out of the juniorates were better educated, degreed, and required less professional support. In some cases, juniorates possessed more professional proficiencies than older sisters who had been teaching for years. My respondents explained that this sometimes led to tension and conflict, especially in convents.

The SFC and Vatican II empowered some teaching sisters to re-conceptualize their individual and professional identities. Whereas once, "sisters were seen as 'subjects' dependents or children who should leave personal choices to others deemed more able and mature," sisters in the post-conciliar era were more autonomous (Glisky, 1997, p. 159). In the following excerpt Ivory, who entered before the IHM juniorate describes the tensions she experienced when attempting to assert professional agency and authority. Ivory, who entered in 1956 stated:

> I always had the sense that we had it all screwed up. In school, we were the highest professionals, we couldn't make a mistake. We were the authority in charge. But, the minute we walked into the convent we had to be humble and submissive and act like we didn't know anything. We were ten years professed before we were supposed to make any decisions. It was the opposite of what it should have been. It was all screwed up. If a parent came to talk to us, we could talk to her. Then, we had to go right in and report it to the superior. So, we went from being the professional to a child. That was very difficult. We were living two lives. We didn't dare betray the fact that we didn't have a

degree when talking to the mom, but inside the convent we didn't have the right to be

alive yet (IHM Focus Group 2/21/13).

At the time when Ivory entered the IHM congregation, young sisters were expected to follow

directions, defer to authority and remain submissive to superiors. This was how hierarchical

formation programs were framed. The result of the unprecedented changes that begin in the

1950s and continued into the 1960s resulted in sisters living and working together who had

vastly different formation experiences and, in some cases, vastly different ideological

conceptions about religious life. Faith, a CSSF who entered in 1968 stated:

Our formation directors were fumbling through this because this wasn't the way they

were formed. It was a real transition period in church history (Interview 8/15/15).

Another example is provided by Isabell, an IHM who entered as a juniorate in 1969:

I was living with someone who was trained in the old method. She expected that I would

ask permission to do things. She became upset with me because I didn't know I had to

ask permission. For example, if the car needed to go to the garage for a repair, I would

just take the car in. Apparently, I was supposed to ask if it was alright for me to do it. I

didn't see why it was a problem. That was a big part of it for me; living with people who

were formed in the old ways (IHM Focus Group 2/21/13).

Although this was a stressful time, sisters noted that they were able to manage stress

because they relied on one another for support, the way any friend would. This mentoring was

organic and designed to meet individual, personal needs. For example, an IHM explained that

her local superior had a rule prohibiting elementary and secondary school teachers from being

friends with one another. The sisters, both young women, close in age had common personal

interests. In the evenings, they frequently snuck into one another's rooms to watch the Ed

Sullivan Show, listen to popular music, and essentially just spend time together as any girls would. The sisters responded to the rules by ignoring them and coming together in a collaborative and supportive way. Sisters who entered in the 1960s may not have been mentoring each other the way they had in the past, yet these relationships were built on trust and mutual friendship. Given that these are explicit functions of mentoring in other settings, additional research on mentoring in the post-conciliar era is clearly needed. My study also limited involvement to women who remained in religious life. Scholars desiring to garner information and insights from women who left congregation could positively contribute to ongoing discussions of mentoring in religious life. Also, worth noting, future scholars may also find that including other actors, such as diocesan officials and priests who oversaw parochial education may positively contribute to our understanding of mentoring.

My study also does not consider state and local policy initiatives that negatively impacted the professionalization of women religious in the teaching apostolate. States imposed restrictive policies that prohibited sisters from being able to successfully meet state mandates for teacher certification. For example, the State of Minnesota prohibited sister teachers from active and practice teaching in public schools while wearing the habit (Biermaier, 1994 and Raiche, 2000). Because sisters could not participate in student teaching opportunities in these settings, they could not advance at the same rate as lay professionals. These state-imposed restrictions on practice directly impeded the professional development of teaching sisters. Scholars on the history of women religious may wish to consider the relationship between policy and professionalization of sister practices. These considerations should not be isolated to the teaching apostolate. There are active lines of inquiry for thought across professions in which women religious engage.

The need for mentoring was especially critical in the early years of my study because parochial school teachers lacked the formal training that public school teachers received. Over the last two decades, a number of states have allowed so called "alternative teacher preparation" (ATP) programs such as Teach for America and the New Teacher Project which each aim to provide alternative teacher training. Each seeks to train teachers in an expeditious manner for teaching placements, often in high need schools. The models of preparation across these programs vary, but each places an emphasis on mentor teaching as part of pre-service teacher preparation.

Further research is needed that explores how mentoring helps pre-service teacher practitioners prepare for the field in these alternative teacher certification programs. Comparing the structures and functions of mentoring in these programs with those included in this study would be valuable. In circumstances where a pre-service teacher lacks traditional preparation, my study demonstrates that mentoring under the close supervision of a more advanced professional may be essential. Mentors can assist with planning, instruction, pedagogy, assessment and day-to-day operations. They may also provide emotional and occupational support. Whether mentoring can be as effective in alternative preparation programs without the close communities teaching sisters enjoyed is unclear. Conducting further research on mentoring in schools using alternative teacher preparation models will add meaningful and significant contributions to this area of inquiry.

Although my dissertation does not investigate the relationship between congregations that had two-year colleges versus those that had four-year colleges, I believe this topic is worthy of additional exploration. How did congregations, some with two-year colleges, others with four-year colleges, network with the SFC? Was the level of involvement the same or different? And,

if so, why or why not? Something to consider is whether or not SFC was prominent or universally important across congregations. Is it possible that affiliation with SFC correlated with the types of colleges administered by nuns? Some respondents were far more familiar than others with SFC than others; it would be interesting to know what role, if any, higher education played in congregational involvement with SFM related activities.

Another area for future research pertains to the shift from the Sister Formation Movement to the Sister Formation Conference. As my dissertation states, congregations were making improvements to sister formation programs prior to the establishment of a formal entity, the Sister Formation Conference (SFC). The work preceding the SFC is noted as a movement, or a period of time when change was occurring. However, once the SFC was formally established under the NCEA, the SFC explicitly requested acknowledgement for activities related to changes in sister formation. The Sister Formation Bulletin: Official Publication of the Sister Formation, states:

> At the Executive Committee meeting of the College and University Department of the
> N.C.E.A. held in Chicago on April 21, 1954, it was unanimously agreed that a new
> committee be appointed to be designated as the "Committee on Sister Formation." This
> action of the Executive Committee was the first step by way of cooperation in a
> movement hereinafter referred to. In this way, official recognition was given to the
> project prepared for by a group of Sisters who had already spent several years in thought
> and work before submitting their plan of action. (Bulletin 1954, p. 1).

Therefore, references to the SFM and the SFC lack clear distinction. The founding sisters aimed to ensure the SFC received credit and recognition for advancements in sister formation and requested all subsequent work relative to sister formation be attributed to the SFC. Future

researchers considering case studies on individual religious congregations and with an interest in formation may consider this shift as worthy of closer scrutiny.

Something that I was interested in, but did not pursue at length, involved the carefully crafted notebooks some sisters recalled receiving. If congregations have these in their archives, it would be interesting to see what notations were included in the writings. Contemporary teachers implementing state and local curriculum frequently make notations in their unit plans. This was a practice I used and encouraged others to use when I supervised preservice teacher educators in field placements. Notations are interesting because they assist teachers in reflecting on lesson planning, instructional delivery, and assessment. These active skills help teachers identify strengths, weaknesses, areas for further instruction, etc. All of which are essential components of teacher self-reflection and professional development.

Another area I did not explore in depth but may be of interest to other researchers includes emblematic memory. Author Steve Stern defines emblematic memory as, "refer[ing] not to a single remembrance of a specific content, not to a concrete or substantive 'thing,' but to a framework that organizes meaning, selectivity and counter memory" (2006, p.105). All of the respondents in my study had lived and worked closely together for decades. This raises the question of whether the memories they report are all individual ones, or rather are reflections of collective memories that they have shared and honed together over time. This is a limitation of this study in the sense that I cannot easily distinguish between the two; yet, may generate questions that are interesting to future researchers. A specific memory recalled by one person can have limited meaning; emblematic memory allows for broad interpretations of memory that can be added to via individual recollections or accounts. Emblematic memory can also be applied to large groups or masses, or in this case religious communities. What makes emblematic memory

interesting is that it allows broad conceptualization of a memory and within it elements can be pushed back, eliminated, or relegated as more important and worthier of remembering. For those memories deemed worthy of remembering by religious communities, individuals can take ownership of the memory and make it their own within the context of a larger group.

Religious sisters are not just individuals; they are collective members of a community. The memories sisters form and experience may have individual attributes but are also part of a larger association of congregational memory experiences. Stern states, "The emblematic memories considered to have captured the most essential collective truth gain a certain primacy of place in the society's memory box" (Stern, 2006, pp. 107). This is applicable to religious life because, although one individual may recall a memory, an entire group, order, or community can relate to the memory. Emblematic memory delivers a "framework of meaning" that expands across congregations rather than attributing memory to one specific event or occurrence in isolation. Although collective memory and emblematic memory were not the subjects of my research questions, it was obvious across data sets that I was tapping into more than individual memory. For example, a sister in the IHM focus group described a superior whom she believed struggled with leadership. Despite the fact that the memory was being recalled by one individual, all of the individuals present bellowed in unison, "I had her!" These collective responses indicate that personal attributes and characteristics, when described, are distinguishable given the familiarity sisters have with one another. It also indicates that sisters shared similar experiences and can relate to one another's thoughts and perceptions.

These examples of emblematic and collective memory form interesting considerations for researchers with interests in pursuing these lines of inquiry further. Sisters shared spaces, time,

and experiences that fostered collective memory; however, as these concepts did not align with my research questions, I did not delve deeply into these constructs.

Summary

Sisters relied heavily on one another for professional support. Especially in the first half of the period I studied, but to some extent throughout the period; helping each other was primarily how sisters learned to teach and how they acquired professional skills. Although a significant practice, mentoring was largely "taken for granted" by congregations. Members from all four congregations interviewed said that helping one another was something that sisters just did. That these women developed mentoring networks to help one another without being asked suggests something about either their congregations' nature as well as, more generally, about the human need to help those we care about.

Conclusion

Religious life provided ample opportunity for sisters to mentor one another. Even under challenging circumstances, sisters sought out creative ways to help and be helped. In the earlier years of this study, sisters entered the apostolate with little-to-no formal educational training. Congregations responded by offering support in informal, holistic ways. After the SFM, sisters relied on formalized mechanisms for professional growth and development. As sisters attained degrees and gained professional experience from other resources, mentoring models changed. Overall, mentoring was a significant and consistent mechanism for sister teacher development in the early part of the time period under consideration. As argued, mentoring changed as a result of the SFC and programs like the juniorate. However, despite its varying forms, sisters interviewed said mentoring did help them acclimate to religious life and to the teaching apostolate.

Given the widespread consolidation and closing of Catholic schools, the narratives offered by sisters engage and capture the essence and history of Catholic school culture in a particular time and place. My study humanizes sisters' experiences in the broad historical context of the Catholic school movement and the stories add an important chapter in the history of parochial education.

Appendix A

Table 1

Participants

Sisters, Servants Immaculate Heart Of Mary, Scranton, PA	Congregation of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany, NY	Third Order of Saint Francis Syracuse, NY	Felician Franciscans Buffalo, NY
Focus Group	9*	7	0	0
Individual Participants	6	8	3*	7*

Note: *One IHM participant entered in 1969 and one CSSF entered in 1982; however, data from those participants were not included in my findings

*Three OSFs were interviewed; data included for two because one participant left congregation

Appendix B

Participants by Congregation and Date of Entry

Congregation	Pseudonym	Focus Group	Personal Interview	Date of Entry
CSJ	Carrie	X		1952
CSJ	Chloe	X	X	1953
CSJ	Cami	X		1953
CSJ	Carmine	X		1952
CSJ	Cindy	X	X	1949
CSJ	Caroline	X	X	1952
CSJ	Catherine	X		1957
CSJ	Cynthia		X	1960
CSJ	Cassandra		X	1944
CSJ	Claire		X	1953
CSJ	Charlotte		X	1950
CSJ	Courtney		X	1955
IHM	Irma	X		1955
IHM	Isabell	X		1969
IHM	India	X		1956
IHM	Ivy	X	X	1960
IHM	Ingrid	X	X	1960
IHM	Ida		X	1958
IHM	Inez	X		1957
IHM	Isadora	X		1959
IHM	Indira	X		1956
IHM	Ivory	X		1956
IHM	Iowa		X	1946
IHM	Isla		X	1962
IHM	Imelda		X	1969
OSF	Sara		X	1943
OSF	Susie		X	1960
CSSF	Faith		X	1968
CSSF	Fatima		X	1949
CSSF	Felicity		X	1961
CSSF	Francesca		X	1982
CSSF	Faye		X	1951
CSSF	Fiona		X	1948
CSSF	Florence		X	1950

Appendix C

Research Questions:

1) What do teaching sisters' oral histories reveal about their development of teaching skills? 2) What do teaching sisters' oral histories reveal about how formal and informal networks supported their development of these skills? 3) What do teaching sisters' oral histories reveal about how support evolved over time?

Focus Group Interview Questions:

1) Can we begin with introductions and will you please sign the consent document?
2) When did you enter congregation?
3) Can you recall specific experiences or events that led you to enter?
4) What were the requirements for entering congregation at the time?
5) How did your congregation prepare you for the complex roles you were to assume in Catholic schools?
6) What countervailing pressures did you experience as you assumed your professional responsibilities?
7) What strategies did you use to negotiate any stresses associated with your advancement in school positions?
8) Was your community involved in Sister Formation Conference and if so, how was it implemented?
9) Did your congregation change formal entrance requirements after Sister Formation Conference?
10) Am I asking the right questions?

Oral History Interview Questions:

1) How did your order prepare you for the complex roles you were to assume in Catholic schools?
2) How were you helped formally or informally by others?
3) How did you offer support formally or informally?
4) What countervailing pressures did you experience as you assumed your professional responsibilities?
5) In what ways did you experience Sister Formation Movement?
6) What strategies did you use to deal with the stresses associated with your advancement in school positions?

Interview Guide:

- When did you enter community?
- Can you recall specific experiences or events that led to your taking vows?
- Tell me about WHY you chose religious vocation?
- How did the decision to join a religious community impact your life at the time?
- What were the requirements for entering your community at the time?
- How did your order prepare you for the complex roles you were to assume in Catholic schools?
- How did you help prepare others?
- What countervailing pressures did you experience as you assumed your professional responsibilities?
- What strategies did you use to deal with the stresses associated with the advancement in school positions?
- Was your community involved in Sister Formation Movement and if so, how was it implemented?
- In what ways did YOU experience Sister Formation Movement?
- Did your community change formal entrance requirements after Sister Formation Movement?

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Education:

Doctor of Education   Syracuse University – Syracuse, NY
                                 EdD Teaching & Leadership, May 2019
                                 NYS School District Administrator Certification

Masters of Education   Boston College – Boston, MA 1997
                                 NYS Special Education Certification, K-12

Bachelor of Arts   Syracuse University – Syracuse, NY 1994
                                 NYS Social Studies Education 7-12

University Positions:

Project Advance Syracuse University   Syracuse, NY 12/15 - Present
Assistant Director
- Responsible for the administration of Forensic Science, Chemistry and Science Research courses for nearly 3,300 students taking Syracuse University courses for university credit through Project Advance

University Supervisor, Syracuse University   Syracuse, NY 2011 - Present
EDU 508 Inclusive Elementary and Special Education
"A Bridge to the City" Urban Teaching Program
- Supervise pre-service teacher educators completing long term student teaching placements in urban, inclusive schools in New York, NY

Summer Start, Syracuse University   Syracuse, NY Summer 2018
Seminar Instructor
- Assist students with the transition from high school to college
- Provide academic and social/emotional support
- Acclimate students to valuable university resources that support achievement

Elmira College   Elmira, NY   8/2015 - 4/2016
Visiting Professor/Lecturer Childhood Special Education
- Instructed pre-service teacher education candidates in teacher preparation courses and liberal arts education

Regional Project Liaison, Syracuse University   Syracuse, NY 6/2014 – 6/2015
Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities
Faculty Professional Development Project

- Provided professional development for teacher and school leader education program faculty and relevant arts and sciences faculty at independent institutions, including deans, department chairs, teaching and research faculty for fifteen independent colleges and universities in New York State
- Engaged professional learning communities in higher education to develop faculty expertise in accordance with the New York State Department of Education's Race to the Top/Regents Reform Agenda
- Provided faculty with information and resources to address programmatic changes related to teacher certification requirements, the state's P-12 Common Core State Standards, and reporting and accreditation requirements

Regional Project Coordinator, Syracuse University Syracuse, NY 5/2013-6/2104
Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities
Faculty Professional Development Project

- Provided professional development for teacher and school leader program faculty and relevant arts and sciences faculty at independent institutions, including deans, department chairs, teaching and research faculty for six independent colleges and universities in New York State

Graduate Assistant, Syracuse University   Syracuse, NY 2011-2015
- Teaching and Leadership Department
- Early Childhood and Inclusive Special Education
- Elementary Social Studies Methods and Curriculum
- Supervisor of Student Teachers

University Teaching Experience:

Spring 2016   Elmira College, Teacher Education Department, Elmira NY
                   EDU 2020 Teaching Students with Disabilities in the
                   Inclusive Classroom
                   EDU 3351 Assessing Students with Disabilities
                   EDU 2222 Managing Challenging Behavior
Fall 2105   EDU 1010 Foundations of Education
                   EDU 2020 Teaching Students with Disabilities in the
                   Inclusive Classroom

Syracuse University Teaching Experience:

2011-Present   EDU 508 Inclusive Elementary and Special Education
                   Teaching and Leadership Department
                   Supervise student teaching placements in New York City

Spring 2018	HST/WGSP 349 Women in American History Civil War to Present, Teaching Assistant Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, History Department
Spring 2014	HST/WGSP 349 Women in American History Civil War to Present, Teaching Assistant Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, History Department
Fall 2013	EED 636/336 Instructor, Inclusive Social Studies Methods and Curriculum Teaching and Leadership Department EDU 508 Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor of Student Teachers in Early Childhood and Early Childhood Special Education
Spring 2013	EED 336 Instructor, Inclusive Social Studies Methods and Curriculum Teaching and Leadership Department
Spring 2012	EED 336 Instructor, Inclusive Social Studies Methods and Curriculum Teaching and Leadership Department
Fall 2012	EED 400 Early Childhood Special Education, Teaching Assistant
Publications:	Nappa-Carroll, M. (2016). [Review of the book *Education, Identity and Women Religious, 1800-1950,* Eds. Raftery, D. and Smyth, E.] Retrieved from https://historyofwomenreligious.org/book-reviews/
Fellowship:	Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, Notre Dame University - Rome Seminar Summer 2015

Conference Presentations:

Nov. 2018	National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Programs *Critical Mentoring and Scholarship Production in Concurrent Enrollment Programs*, San Antonio Texas
June 2018	History of Women Religious Britain and Ireland *Mentor Teaching: A cross comparative analysis of four teaching congregations Mid-Twentieth Century* Moore Institute, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland
Oct. 2017	National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Programs (NACEP) *The Role of Theory in Concurrent Enrollment Administration* Washington, DC

Sept. 2017	Developing Research in Catholic Education *Sister Stories: Using Oral History to Explore Mentoring & the* *Professionalization of Teaching Sister Practices* Heythrop College, University of London London, UK
June 2016	History of Women Religious Triennial Conference 2016 *Deinstitutionalization and Catholic Nuns in Pursuit of Justice* Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA

Guest Lectures:

Spring 2018	Syracuse University Library & Information Science Student Assembly Adding to the Historical Narrative: Education, Social Reform and Teaching Nuns
Fall 2017	Syracuse University Catholic Center Lecture Series Catholic Teaching Sisters and Social Justice Initiatives
Fall 2016	Redhouse Arts Center, Syracuse NY Differentiating instruction for inclusive learners
Spring 2010-2014	Say Yes to Education Syracuse University
2009-2014	Literacy Corps Syracuse University, Syracuse NY

School Leadership Experience:

Principal, Most Holy Rosary   Syracuse, NY 2008 – 2011
- Urban-Inclusive Pre – K to 6th Grade
- Developed an institutional and organizational inclusive parochial school model
- Recruitment/retention of faculty and staff
- Curriculum Adoption
- Marketing/Development/Enrollment Management
- Procuring, writing and overseeing educational grants
- Fiduciary Management

Administrator, Grant Middle School Syracuse City School District, Syracuse, NY 2000 – 2003
- Committee on Special Education Chair (CSE)
- Coordinator of Academic Intervention Services (AIS)
- Grade level administrator in looping model, grades 7 and 8
- Faculty supervision and evaluation
- New York State Testing Coordinator

- Coordinator of Basic Educational Data Systems Reporting (BEDS)

Administrative Intern, Clary Middle School Syracuse City School District, Summer 2000-2001
- District administrator for K-12 Special Education Programming
- Organized Related Service Provision including APE, OT, PT, Speech and Language etc.

Instructional Experience:
Syracuse City School District, Syracuse NY
- Clary Middle School - Resource Teacher 2005-2008
- Fowler High School - Special Education Teacher 1997 - 2000

Cayuga Onondaga BOCES
- Long Term Substitute Teacher Special Education

Community Engagement:

Saint Thomas More Foundation Syracuse University   Syracuse, NY 2015 - Present
Board Member

The Redhouse Center for the Arts   Syracuse, NY 2015 - Present
Board Member

Syracuse University Alumni Association   Syracuse, NY 2018 - Present
Board Member

Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program   Syracuse, NY 2014 – Present
Host
The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs
Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

Professional Affiliations:

The National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP)
Peer Review Team Member 2018