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AN INVESTIGATION OF SCHOOL-BASED MENTORS' PERCEPTIONS
OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A HERMENEUTIC INQUIRY (184 pp.)

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The purpose of this hermeneutic inquiry was to examine the perceptions of four school-based mentors in a K-12 public school district and the way they made meaning of their professional growth, meaning derived from interpretations of critical incidents in their mentoring partnerships. The purpose of describing such meaning was to provide a basis for understanding the different ways in which mentors think about their professional growth. Once this groundwork is laid, insights into potential sources of professional development for mentors can be considered.

Data were collected during in-depth interviews with individuals and focus groups. A four-phase phenomenographic design was employed to analyze the data from the mentors' narratives. Analysis of the mentors' stories revealed that a variety of experiences influenced their professional development.

One particular finding revealed that the mentors' reflecting and sharing their perceived beliefs, attitudes, and identities (e.g., critical friend) with one another contributed to their professional growth. This study involved more than giving answers to a few questions; it forced the participants to reflect on what they do. The nature of the

research challenged the subjects to change their way of thinking. Coming together to reflect on what they do, they collaborated and examined their actions. The participants also engaged in a thought-provoking process, revealing ideas many of them had taken for granted. Few previous studies in the mentoring literature have probed the nature of these mentoring events and the nature of what is discussed in research in an ethnographic study describing the realities of the lives of urban school-based mentors.