

**Decision Points for the ODE Mentoring Summit:
A Synthesis of Research and Practice**

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Studies and Literature Reviewed

We reviewed a total of 54 articles, reports or book chapters. Of these, 12 were program descriptions that also included evaluation data, 4 were research studies that focused on a single induction and/or mentoring program, 10 examined results of induction/mentoring programs across a range of settings. An additional 22 articles were reviews of research or comparative description of effective induction/mentoring programs. A remaining 6 articles were brief reports or newsletter/paper discussions of induction/mentoring programs. Seventeen more articles that were also brief reports or newsletters didn't make it to the bibliography because the same programs or concepts were described more thoroughly in other articles we had.

The following quote from Ingersoll and Smith (2004) describes the somewhat elusive nature of the research evident in many of the articles reviewed: "Often studies of the effects of mentoring do not include a control group of the non-mentored. Other studies do not control for other possible factors that might account for the effects of induction, such as the characteristics of schools. Many studies focus on only attitudinal outcomes, such as teachers' feelings of the benefits and do not include data on more tangible outcomes such as actual teacher retention or teacher effectiveness."

Nevertheless, there was some hard data on new teacher retention related to mentoring/induction in some of the programs: Curran and Goldnick (2002) cited NCES data that among new teachers who did not participate in an induction program, 26% left the profession within four years, while teachers who participated in an induction program had only a 15% attrition rate after four years. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) cite empirical support for the positive effects of new teacher mentoring on retention: among teachers participating in a mentoring program, the attrition rate was 4% for four years, while the statewide average was 9% per year; and in another program, 92% in Year 1 and 100% in Year 2 of the mentored teachers remained, while only 73% in Year 1 and 70% in Year 2 of the non-mentored teachers remained on the job. Other studies citing increased teacher satisfaction (e.g., Ingersoll and Smith, 2004, Kelley, 2004) and enhanced professional growth (e.g., Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004) were fairly well documented while data on increased student success was far more limited.

We found much more literature – studies, program descriptions, and program evaluations – regarding induction/mentoring of beginning teachers than administrators. Thus, the main body of this report will emphasize what can be learned from the research on teachers. However, literature that directly describes results regarding induction/mentoring programs for new principals and superintendents echoes much of the teacher literature and what we did find will be summarized in a separate section of this report, with a more detailed summary in an attachment.

Clarifications and Definitions

The terms "mentoring", "induction", and "professional development" are used in combination and interchangeably in the literature we reviewed to refer both to preservice and inservice teachers' needs for a range of types of assistance as they begin careers as teachers or administrators. For this report, we will emphasize literature that focuses on the needs of new teachers and administrators – particularly those new to the profession or role and not just new to a district or school building.

A number of authors (e.g., Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Wong, 2004; Fulton, Yoon & Lee, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004) emphasize that "mentoring" and "induction" is not the same. "Induction" refers to a process with multiple components such as seminars, release time, peer observation and coaching that is designed to support the development of new teachers and retain them in the profession. Mentoring is a component, albeit a critical one, of a more comprehensive induction process, which is itself, a component of ongoing professional development for both beginning and experienced teachers.

The reason it is important to clarify, there is some evidence that mentoring alone is insufficient to either retain new teachers in the profession or to assist them to develop into highly effective teachers or administrators (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Wong, 2004). However, teachers with more comprehensive induction support leave after one year of teaching at half the rate of new teachers who participate in no induction activities (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Components of a Comprehensive Induction System

Induction refers both to a system of supports made available to beginning teachers *and* a stage in professional development (Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005). The overall purposes of induction are to acculturate the new professional to the professional community in the school and district *and* to support the new professional through a course of structured learning and professional growth (generally 1-3 years in length) that will become the basis for ongoing professional development and life-long learning throughout teachers' and administrators' careers. To this end, some of the structures or components recommended include:

1. 2-4 day Orientation and Induction workshop prior to the beginning of school (Wong, 2004)
2. Mentoring component (e.g., Curran & Goldnick, 2002; Wong, 2004, Fulton, Yoon, Lee, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004) that includes individual, group, and peer mentoring (Cuddapah, 2002)
3. Observations and visits to other classrooms and schools (Howe, 2006; Wong, 2004)
4. Study groups of new and veteran teachers both within and across buildings (Brimijoin & Alouf, 2003)
5. Seminars, workshops, university classes and other structured learning (Howe, 2006; Kelly, 2004; Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005; Wong, 2004)
6. Participation in external networks of professionals through classes, seminars, workshops, e-mentoring and e-networking, and listserves, etc. (Fulton, Yoon & Lee, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004)
7. Opportunities through school structures for ongoing collaboration in curriculum design, teaching, and analysis of student work (Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005).
8. Program alignment between induction, classroom needs and professional standards (Whisnant, Elliott, & Pynchon, 2005)
9. Ongoing formative assessment and feedback based on clear standards (Curran & Goldnick, 2002)
10. Strong administrative support and participation (Whisnant et al., 2005; Wood, 2005; Wong, 2004)
11. Incentives for new and veteran teachers to participate in induction activities such as common planning time, money for materials, reduced workload (Bartlett et al., 2005; Simmons, 2000; Whisnant et al., 2005)
12. Cooperation and coordination with unions (Whisnant et al., 2005)
13. "Enhanced" mentoring programs for teachers in high-poverty, hard-to-staff schools with highly diverse student populations. (Whisnant et al., 2005)

Mentoring as a Component of Induction

Across many of the studies reviewed researchers found that both induction systems and mentoring programs – whether they were a component induction or served as the sole induction strategy for new teacher – were highly variable across states and districts. Mentoring programs, in particular, varied both in *focus or purpose* and in *structure* leading to variable outcomes and effectiveness.

Mentoring Purposes

A number of studies describe variation in the focus of mentoring, although these are framed in different ways (e.g., Krull, 2005; Young et al., 2005; Cuddapah, 2002; Gold, 1996; Young, 2005). Thus a mentor might focus on *structural related supports* that include assisting the new teacher with acquiring the knowledge, skills, and strategies that will allow them to be successful in the classroom and school. Alternatively, a mentor might focus on *psychological and emotional support* for which the purpose is to build the protégé's sense of self through confidence building, feelings of effectiveness, positive self-esteem, enhancing self-reliance and learning to handle the stresses of transitioning to full time teaching (Gold, 1996).

Others (e.g., Wang & Odell) argue that differing mentoring focus is grounded in different underlying theories or perspectives on learning. Thus, a *humanistic perspective* of learning and learning problems driving a mentoring approach would end up focusing on Gold's psychological and emotional supports. While, in contrast, a *situated apprentice* theory of learning would lead the mentor to focus on technical and contextual guidance to connect university coursework to teaching. While a *critical constructivist* theory of learning would demand that the mentor assist the new teacher to critique existing knowledge and practices and work collaboratively to transform such knowledge and practice to make schools and communities more socially just.

The point is that unless the focus and purposes of the mentoring component are clearly articulated, they can vary even across mentors who are left to draw upon their own theories, perspectives, and experiences (Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith & Erickson, 2005). Hoffmeyer, Milliren and Eckstein (2005) contrast mentors who use a “red pencil mentality” to identify mistakes and critique the skills and results of one's protégé to mentors who draw upon invitational theory or more positive approaches to “catch someone doing something right” and work with the adult learner cooperatively to model, coach, and help them understand their own strengths and build upon them. That is, will the mentor understand her purpose as *assisting* or *assessing* and to what extent will the mentoring program support or formalize that focus?

Young et al., (2005) investigated “personal mentoring models” among a group of 18 mentors working with 36 teachers and found three patterns mentors used: responsive, interactive, and directive. Further, most shifted from one to the other over time. But most tended to withdraw from the novice teacher at mid-year becoming more distant and disengaged, which suggested to the authors that they were being guided, at least in part, by assumptions about learning to teach being an essentially solitary act and novice teachers are often best served when allowed to “find their own way” (p. 185). Mentors, then bring their own histories, experiences, assumptions, theories, and practices to the task of mentoring – all of which, without explicit discussion and support can contribute to both the variability and the effectiveness of mentoring programs.

Mentoring Structures

Whether the focus of the mentoring component is well-articulated and overt or left to interpretation of mentors, teachers, and administrators, the studies and programs descriptions reviewed also revealed wide variety in the structures of mentoring programs (e.g., Cuddapah, 2002). Dimensions of this variability include (e.g., Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Kilburg & Hancock, 2006):

- **Duration:** Most new teacher mentoring programs lasted one school year, though those generally identified as more effective were often two- or three-year programs with a different developmental focus for subsequent years (Cuddapah, 2002; Fulton, Yoon & Lee, 2005)
- **Intensity/Time:** Curran and Goldrick (2002) and Kilburg and Hancock (2006) cite data from the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education that report that 38% of protégés who worked with mentors a few times a year reported substantial improvement in their instructional skills. However, that figure jumps to 88% for those who work with mentors at least once a week.
- **Number of New Teachers Served:** If the mentor teacher is a full-time classroom teacher with no release time, s/he typically serves one teacher only. If the mentor teacher has release time, one or two protégés may be served. If the mentor teacher is either a recently retired teacher or hired to be a full-time coach for new teachers, s/he may have a case load of 4-16 mentees.
- **Attention to Match:** All studies examined recommended a careful attention to matching mentors to mentees, with same building and same subject matter or grade level deemed highly important. Mentoring needed to be voluntary and not required. Gender, ethnicity, and learning style matches were also recommended (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).
- **Geography:** Time for mentor/mentee face-to-face interaction is drastically reduced if mentor and mentee are in different buildings or districts. Regularly scheduled phone and email contacts can alleviate this somewhat, but the nature of the mentoring changes. (Kilburg & Hancock, 2006)
- **Selection of Mentors:** All mentors required teaching experience, but in the various programs this ranged from 4 years to 20+ years. Longevity and recognition as an excellent teacher were the major selection criteria, although many articles warned against selecting a mentor solely on the basis of her teaching success with children. (New Teacher Center @ UCSC, 2006). Mentoring is essentially teaching adults and different methods and perspectives are needed for the best results (CoBabe, 2002). Some mentors were self-selected volunteers; some were appointed by the principal, and some were appointed by the district. Others were full-time mentors on temporary leave from their teaching positions. Selection of the latter group was very careful and deliberate.
- **Funding:** Mentoring/induction programs were either state, district, or grant-funded, or had some combination of these three, although one program also received funding from the union. If a state requires new teacher mentoring as a step in achieving licensure, these programs are nearly all state funded (Bartlett et al., 2005); however there were cases of unfunded mandates which districts often provided with simpler, less supportive programs.
- **Activities:** Mentoring activities ranged from basic to comprehensive depending on the funding and the level of commitment to supporting new teachers. A variety of activities ranging from simple orientation to lessons modeled by mentors, weekly mentor/protégé meetings, peer observations, and many of the activities listed above under Components of a Comprehensive Induction System are included in various mentoring structures. (Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Humphrey, Wechsler & Bosetti, 2007)

- **Evaluation:** Rigorous evaluation and documentation of program implementation and learning was lacking in the majority of programs (Bartlett et al., 2005). A notable exception is the University of California, Santa Cruz New Teacher Center (Simmons, 2000).
- **Preparation of Mentor:** Mentors in informal programs are often little more than same building volunteer “buddies” who provide some first year emotional support and getting-to-know-the-ropes tips. When mentors received stipends they also generally received organized mentor training ranging from 2-3 half or full-day workshops to programs that followed up summer institutes with monthly mentor meetings, professional development workshops, and structured mentor networking. Simmons (2000) warned that awareness of current pedagogy, assessment driven planning, and standards on the part of the mentor was important to avoid reinforcing a status-quo manner of teaching. Some programs used kits or materials already prepared by others (such as the ETS PATHWISE training) as the backbone of their mentor training (CoBabe, 2002); others developed their own mentor training handbooks.

Preparation of Mentors

Nearly every study, program description or article we reviewed spoke to the critical need for mentor preparation and ongoing professional development. In fact, several asserted that the most significant component of any mentoring program is the quality of the mentor (e.g., Moir, 2000; Krull, 2005; Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Hoffmeyer, Millirim, & Eckstein, 2005; Suters & Kershaw, 2002; Howe, 2006; Brimijoin & Alouf, 2003). Other studies reported that even after mentor training, nearly 20% of the mentors felt that they could still use additional direction, support and resources to carry out their roles (e.g., Suters & Kershaw, 2002) which supports the need for ongoing mentor development. Simply having years of teaching experience, then, is insufficient either to be a mentor, or even to qualify for mentor training in some cases.

Kelly (2004) reporting on a partnership between the University of Colorado, Boulder and six school districts described how mentors were chosen for “demonstrated teaching excellence, dispositions toward collaboration and inquiry, commitment to professional growth and change, and expertise in specific district and university priority areas such as literacy, math, or classroom assessment.”

Three Spheres of Proficiency

Different authors organize the content of mentor preparation in different ways. Some studies do not specifically describe the mentors’ preparation, though they speak to areas needed for continuing development. Taken together, however, all the studies, reviews, program descriptions, and evaluations we examined identified three types of training and development need by mentors.

1. **Best Curriculum/Teaching Practice.** Even effective experienced teachers in a number of the programs reviewed required additional professional development in classroom practices and inquiry-based and reflective teaching (Moir, 2000; Morshak & Klotz, 2002; Kelly, 2004). Other authors also focus on additional preparation in helping new teachers to engage students in higher-level learning, and using existing technologies to supplement/improve instruction and collecting and analyzing student work against content standards (Marshak & Klotz, 2002; Moir, 2000). Others also recommend ongoing professional learning in classroom management and skills in differentiating curriculum and instruction in order to better accommodate the diverse needs of students (Suters & Kershaw, 2002; Brimijoin & Alouf, 2003).
2. **Shifting from Teacher to Teacher Educator.** Mentoring requires teachers to move beyond being very good teachers to *become resources, instructors and coaches to other adults rather than working directly with students*. To successfully shift from a focus on students’ needs to a

focus on teachers' needs requires specialists not only to make a critical conceptual shift, but also to develop their own capacity to work with adults rather than students. While many of the tools of effective teaching will transfer from students to teacher, not all will, and not all will be sufficient to become successful teachers of adults.

Content in this area of professional development for mentors includes learning how to coach, observe, role model and effectively communicate with new teachers (Moir, 2000; Cuddaph, 2002; Kilburg & Hancock, 2006; Brimijoin & Alouf, 2003; Hoffmeyer, Milliren, Eckstein, 2005; Suters & Kershaw, 2002). But in addition some also recommend a focus on the adult learner, learning to facilitate meetings, and learning how to help teachers develop networks of support and participate in learning communities (Suters & Kershaw, 2002; Brimijoin & Alouf, 2003; Hoffmeyer, Milliren, Eckstein, 2005).

3. **Culture of District and Ongoing Improvement Plans.** A number of authors (e.g., Cuddaph, 2002) advocate that induction and mentoring programs be designed to contribute to "reform-minded education". To this end, mentors need to not only see themselves as engaged in ongoing improvement of schools as well as their own practice. They also need to be able to assist the new teacher develop an understanding of the school's culture, traditions, and rituals as well as the community's goals for education and the district's agenda for ongoing school improvement (Marshak & Klotz, 2002; Yendol-Hoppy, 2007; Wang & Odell, 2007).

Induction/Mentoring for Administrators

In comparison to new teacher induction/mentoring, very little research has been done on the induction and mentoring of new principals and/or superintendents. Most of the studies and reports include a literature review, description of program features, and self-report surveys of participants. Sixteen articles/studies/reports were reviewed for this section overview, with by far the most comprehensive information and data coming from the large-scale reports developed by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (CTP), the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, the Wallace Foundation, and New Visions for Public Schools. Many of the major reports were funded by The Wallace Foundation, and many of these are already familiar to the Oregon Leadership Network because they are also linked from the ODE OLN webpages.

In determining the nature of principal mentoring, authors (e.g., Fry, Bottoms & O'Neill, 2005) recommend first considering proficiencies expected of successful principals today such as those described by the Interstate School Leaders Licensing Consortium (ISLLC) as well as state standards. That is, new administrator mentoring should directly address current standards and proficiencies required for leadership in schools and districts. A number of authors (e.g., Darling-Hammond, La Pointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007; Sparks, 2001; Spiro, Mattis, & Mitgang, 2007) describe features and components of effective mentoring programs that include activities and opportunities that focus on:

1. Building capacity and proficiencies that address standards,
2. Leadership for change and ongoing school/district improvement, and
3. Transformative and collaborative learning through networking and communities of practice.

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2007), the best programs focus on instructional leadership for improved teaching and learning and use of classroom data to organize change. Similarly, Spiro et al. (2007) emphasize that high-quality training for mentors is essential and that the primary goal of

mentoring should be “to provide new principals with the knowledge, skills and courage to become leaders of change who put teaching and learning first in their schools” (p. 4).

Principals responding to a national survey (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007) reported that being mentored or coached by an experienced administrator was the most helpful, followed by such activities as participation in a principal network, reciprocal observations, reading and research, and workshops/conferences, though in descending order of helpfulness. Successful administrator mentoring programs are finding that, like mentoring for teachers, reports on effective administrator mentoring focus on the importance of high-quality mentor selection and training that leads to effective mentor-protégé relationships and are sustained for at least 1-2 years (Conyers, 2004; Dukess, 2001; Spiro et al., 2007). Effective mentoring structures for administrators are different than those for teachers but include examples such as intensive summer institutes, monthly or bi-monthly half-day seminars, and one-to-one mentor meetings every 4-6 weeks (Conyers, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Possible Decision Points for the Summit Discussion

Decision Point 1: Is Oregon developing an induction system or a mentoring component or both? If induction, what should be the components?

Decision Point 2: What should be the focus of mentoring activities?

Decision Point 3: What structure for mentoring should we seek to provide?

Decision Point 4: What should be the content and structure of mentor preparation and development?

Decision Point 5: In light of the above decisions, what is best way to use current available resources?

Attachments

1. Bibliography, divided by teacher mentoring/induction and administrator mentoring/induction
2. Fulton, K., Yoon, I. & Lee, C. (2005). *Induction into learning communities*. Washington D.C.: National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future.
3. Table of components of exemplary programs
4. Expanded summary of “What do New Administrators Need to Know and be Able to Do?”

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