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Mentoring and New Teacher Induction in the United States: A Review and Analysis of Current Practices

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In this article, current practices were reviewed in mentoring and induction across three large states—New York, Texas, and California—and one small state, Utah. Patterns and trends are described in the United States, program results and evolving views of mentoring are discussed, gaps in the research literature are identified, and the future of mentoring is pondered.

Keywords: mentoring, beginning teacher induction, mentoring models, current practices and trends, needed research, professional learning communities, social learning theory.

The Context

Before launching into a strong Marxist feminist attack on mentoring, Colley, noting how widespread the practice is, asserted: "Mentoring is the 'in' thing" (2003, p. 257). Given the dramatic growth the past two decades in mentoring as the dominant form of teacher induction and how celebratory most of the research on mentoring is, she certainly had a point. In the United States being formally mentored in some fashion has become a common experience among beginning teachers. No doubt nearly all beginning teachers are informally mentored. Of formal mentoring, *Education Week* in its "Fifty-State Report Card" (2010) reported recently that 23 states fund induction or mentoring programs and required all new teachers to participate. Nineteen states made a similar requirement of prospective principals. Much of the interest in mentoring has been tied to its promise to increase teacher retention (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). However, in a time of severe economic downturn and teacher job loss coupled with intensifying accountability pressures, concern with teacher retention has been nudged aside as the primary aim of mentoring. Increasingly mentoring is seen as a key element in developing highly effective teachers (Wang, Odell, & Schwille,

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2008). These are teachers whose students meet or exceed state established grade-level standards for tested achievement.

While all but six states mandate teacher evaluation, practices vary dramatically for both new and veteran teachers alike. Currently, in these assessments only 13 states require taking student achievement into account, increasingly through value-added measures. Others are moving aggressively in this direction (Glazerman, Goldhaber, Loeb, Raudenbush, Staiger & Whiterhurst, 2011). Additionally, in most states, tested student achievement is the basis for rewarding or punishing schools—this despite glaring differences in student populations and in state levels of school funding. In many states funding inequalities are persistent and egregious. For example, *Education Week* reports that Alaska has a gap of about $11,000 in per-pupil spending between high and low spending school systems while Utah has the lowest gap of $2,000 while also spending the least on each child of any state.

Federal education initiatives, beginning with enactment of the No Child Left Behind legislation have increased interest in induction and mentoring. Believing that competition is a key to widespread education reform, the United States Department of Education sponsored Race to the Top will, over time, award $4.3 billion to support system-wide school reform in a very few states. Forty states entered the initial competition, which emphasized five reform areas: (a) designing and implementing rigorous standards and high-quality assessment; (b) attracting and keeping great teachers and leaders in America's classrooms; (c) using data to inform decisions and improve instruction; (d) using innovation and effective approaches to turn-around struggling schools; and (e) demonstrating and sustaining education reform (Race to the Top, 2009). The winners in the first round were Delaware, which received $107 million, and Tennessee, a pioneer in value-added assessment (Sanders & Horn, 1998), which was awarded $502 million. Weakened teacher tenure, increasing numbers of teacher assessments and an expanded place for tested student academic performance in judgments of teacher quality, and accelerated movement toward differentiated pay and roles and responsibilities for teachers dominated the proposals of the 16 state finalists. Mentoring also enjoyed a prominent place in these proposals. Viewing the educational landscape, Colley certainly was correct, mentoring is the *in* thing in the United States. It is not, however, the only *in* thing. Hugging a neo-liberal educational reform agenda at both the state and Federal levels, lots of *things* are now *in*. Creation of regimes of punishment and reward that devalue teacher–student relationship; abundant standardized student testing—and use of value-added measures even as the technology is inadequate for the task of making fair and appropriate judgments of teacher quality (Papay, 2011); development of a national curriculum narrowed to emphasize reading and mathematics and devaluing the arts, the humanities and even science as marginally significant educationally; talk about *best practice* and fidelity of treatment while acknowledging student cultural and

ethnic diversity (but dismissing diversity and even poverty practically as of no genuine educational consequence when it comes to test performance); and rating and ranking everything and, perhaps someday, everyone in sight (Apple, 2004).

This, then, is the context within which teachers teach and beginning teachers are mentored in the United States. The purpose of this article is fourfold: (a) to describe some of the current trends and developments in induction and mentoring within the United States while acknowledging the tremendous difficulty of capturing even the smallest part of such a vast system of education—over 15,000 school districts employing about three million teachers in elementary and middle schools alone; (b) to identify and discuss program results and evolving views of the purposes of mentoring and expectations held of mentors; (c) to locate gaps in the research literature; and (d) to look ahead briefly toward the future of teacher induction and mentoring.

Trends and Developments

In this section, induction and mentoring programs in the three most populous states, California, New York, and Texas, and one of the smallest, Utah, will be described. The intent is to show some of the variation in induction programs and mentoring and begin to locate some of the challenges of program design and operation. Here it is important to note that in the United States teacher licensure is staged, and that permanent certification follows only after a teacher has successfully taught for two or three years and met established state standards for quality teaching.

When seeking models of mentoring and teacher induction, California is often the place where the search begins and ends. In 1998 the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing sponsored and the Governor signed, legislation that restructured teacher credentialing in the state. *Senate Bill 2042* mandated the creation of standards-based routes into teaching, alignment of state adopted academic and performance standards and teacher preparation standards, a performance test for all teachers prior to receiving a teaching credential, and, importantly, required all new teachers to complete a mentoring-intensive two-year induction program. The goals of this legislation were ambitious. By law, each beginning teacher would have an Individualized Induction Plan (IIP) "developed based on the novice teacher's emerging needs. An IIP includes goals, specific strategies for achieving those goals, and documentation of progress in meeting those goals" (Howe, 2006, p. 290). Under the law, beginning teachers are provided intensive support and assistance to assure a smooth transition into teaching and continuous professional growth. In this way, it was believed that retention of teachers, a major concern, would improve. Additionally it was thought that through ongoing formative assessment of progress coupled with frequent

feedback, the quality of teaching would significantly improve leading to increased student performance. Finally, research, development, and on-going programmatic evaluation and reporting were mandated.

California induction programs may be offered by school districts and county offices of education as well as higher education institutions. Funding is through competitive state grants. In 2008–2009, the dollar amounts were impressive: More than $6,000 per year per new teacher, including a minimum of $2,000 from the employing school district. The California Standards for the Teaching Profession, composed of six standards, provide focus and content, but the heart of the program is mentoring:

> Trained Support Providers assist participating teachers in collecting and interpreting evidence of teaching performance, in reflecting on their teaching, and in identifying meaningful professional development activities that are targeted to their individual needs, using the structured activities in The California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers (CFASST) or other approved assessment systems. (BTSA-Basics, 2008)

Now in its twelfth year, the New Teacher Center (NTC) is perhaps the best known and most influential of the California induction programs. Recently having separated from the University of California at Santa Cruz, the Center has incorporated as a non-profit organization so that it might extend its reach. Already, it is a national organization that describes itself as having "served over 49,000 teachers and 5,000 mentors [while] touching millions of students across America" (New Teacher Center, 2010, np). Very active in mentor training, the NTC is working in various capacities with programs scattered across the country, including regional centers, and is supporting a very active research agenda. Over the years the Center has developed a set of eight High Quality Mentoring and Induction Practices that support teacher retention, teacher development, and improved student learning (New Teacher Center, 2010). Characterized in terms of "Moving Toward [and] Moving Away From", these practices include: Moving toward... "Rigorous mentor selection based on qualities of an effective mentor" and away from "Choosing mentors without criteria or an explicit process"; "Ongoing professional development" from "Insufficient professional development and support for mentors"; "Sanctioned time for mentor-teacher interactions" from "Meetings happen occasionally or 'whenever the mentor and teacher are available'"; "Intensive and specific guidance moving teaching practice forward" from "Non-specific, emotional or logistical support alone"; "Professional teaching standards and data-driven conversations" from "Informal and non-evidence based feedback"; "Ongoing beginning teacher professional development" from "Professional development NOT specifically tailored to needs of beginning teachers"; "Clear roles and responsibilities for administrators" from "Lack of training/communication with administrators"; and "Collaboration with all stakeholders" from "Isolated programing and

lack of alignment" (New Teacher Center, 2008, pp. 14–15). Each practice is elaborated in some detail.

The *from* side of the NTC statement nicely captures what is the common practice in many locations. In my own state, Utah, by law each beginning teacher is assigned a mentor but for many mentoring is hit and miss, often ineffective, and always poorly funded. Mostly, mentees are entirely dependent on the good will of their mentors, chosen by their principals, for whatever they receive of benefit from the relationship. School districts may or may not give mentors and beginning teachers released time so they can meet, may or may not make provision for extra pay or offer special training to mentors, and may or may not acknowledge the importance and value of the mentor's work. Respecting the later point, following an unintentional slight from a colleague offered while standing at the school's copy machine, that "she must be enjoying the break from teaching", one mentor commented: "'I wanted to smack him', she said. 'I just feel like there sometimes [is an] attitude of teachers that being a mentor is easy. I get the feeling that people think you're getting time off. I just wish [they would] respect [me]. I do a good job'" (Bullough, 2005, p. 149).

New York offers the New York State Mentor Teacher–Internship Program (MTIP). Established in 1986, the intention is to provide peer guidance and support to first or second year teachers. Throughout the late 1980s the program was consistently funded at ever increasing levels, reaching $16.5 million in 1990–1991. Since then and until recently, funding has been spotty. For example, 84 school districts submitted applications for funding in 1994 for part of $4 million but the funds were never appropriated. This pattern continued—funding, no funding—through the 1990s and into the early 2000s. Between 2004 and 2007 funding was level at $6 million. In 2008-2009, programs were funded in 93 school districts. Nevertheless, given this history, the concern is that mentoring will become an unfunded mandate.

In New York, participating district superintendents choose mentors from a list developed by a select committee composed mostly of teachers and also are responsible for making intern assignments. A mentor is defined as a teacher who has "demonstrated their mastery of pedagogical and subject matters skills, given evidence of superior teaching abilities and interpersonal relationship qualities, and who [has] indicated their willingness to participate in such [a] program" (New York State United Teachers, 2010, p. 7). The program offers one year of support to provisional teachers who are given no less than a 10 percent reduction of classroom instructional time to participate. The state funds up to 10% of the mentor's salary, indicating a reduction in instructional time similar to that offered beginning teachers. A plan is negotiated for how intern needs will be met, which may include participation in established staff development programs, including those offered by

the teacher union. A strong union state, the nature of the mentor/mentee relationship has been carefully specified by law in New York:

> . . . mentors will guide and support their interns... provided that the role of the mentor shall not be construed as limiting or supplanting the authority of school administrators or supervisors to supervise or evaluate the performance of interns, and the information obtained by a mentor through interaction with an intern shall not be made available to supervisors or used in the evaluation of such interns. (New York State United Teachers, 2010, p. 3)

Texas offers a final example. Supported by a Federal grant, beginning in 1999 Texas piloted the Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS). Mentoring of beginning teachers had been mandated by law but unfunded, and few systematic efforts at beginning teacher induction existed. Seeking to improve achievement results in reading and mathematics particularly for minority and economically disadvantaged children and increase teacher retention, $3 million dollars were appropriated in 2002 to support an expanded but optional program of mentoring for beginning teachers. Three years later, and with additional funding, a program was developed to certify *Master Teachers* in reading, science, and mathematics. A stipend of $5,000 was awarded to those teachers completing the program along with opportunities to serve as mentors. Supporting the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program (BTIM) grant, between 2007 and 2010, an additional $30 million dollars was allocated to 50 school districts for improving their teacher mentor programs. Here it should be noted that there are some 1,030 school districts in Texas, both very large and very small. Some districts support their own induction and mentoring programs.

Current legislation supporting the BTIM program provides that funds may be used for mentor stipends, training, and released time to meet with and observe beginning teachers. The statute allows districts to assign mentors to beginning teachers, defined as having less than two years teaching experience. By law, mentors must teach in the same school as those they mentor and teach the same grade level or in the same content area where possible. Finally, mentors must have at least three years of teaching experience and have a superior record of raising tested student achievement levels, and complete an approved program of mentor training.

There is, as noted, great variation in the kind and quality of induction offered to beginning teachers across the 50 states. In many, mentoring is the single most important component, such that the terms *mentoring* and *induction* are often used interchangeably while conceptually, mentoring is but one component, albeit usually the most important element, of a program of planned induction. State and district resources allocated to beginning teacher induction also vary dramatically just as do the amounts spent on educating individual students. While teachers in Utah are by law assigned a mentor, usually by a principal and based as much on teacher reputation than

demonstrated teaching skill, very few mentors receive special training for their new role, released time, or even recognition for their professional service as the episode at the copying machine illustrates. In contrast, California has a well-developed, extensive, and increasingly well-researched state-wide approach with options. In California, every beginning teacher not only has a mentor but that mentor is trained and works within a system of clearly articulated standards that give purpose and direction to program efforts. Mentoring is valued, honored, and respected and program quality consistently assessed. Differences like these promise differences in program outcomes but not only in matters of teacher retention. As noted, while initially the driving concern behind developing induction programs was to increase teacher retention, aims have expanded. In addition to improved retention, induction—and mentoring, more specifically—is increasingly recognized as essential to teacher development and to raising student achievement. Moreover, as will be shortly noted, even greater ambitions are being expressed, that mentoring ought to be a tool for school improvement and cultural reform and renewal, where the focus shifts from the individual mentee and mentor relationship to changing schools. This expansion of aims is evident in several of the proposals in the Race to the Top competition, but is also evident in much of the work being undertaken in California and especially in struggling urban schools and school districts (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006).

Demonstrating Results

Reviewing the wide range of differences among induction programs offered in the US, Smith and Ingersoll (2004, p. 683) concluded:

> Duration and intensity are important sources of variation: Induction programs can vary from a single orientation meeting at the beginning of a school year to a highly structured program involving multiple activities and frequent meetings over a period of several years. Programs vary according to the numbers of new teachers they serve... Programs vary according to their purpose. Some, for instance, are primarily developmental and designed to foster growth on the part of newcomers; others are also designed to assess, and perhaps weed out, those deemed ill suited to the job. Finally, mentoring programs themselves differ along the same dimensions. For example, they vary as to whether they include training for the mentors; how much attention they devote to the match between mentor and mentee; the degree to which mentors are compensated for their efforts, either with a salary supplement or a reduction in other duties; and whether an effort is made to provide mentors who have experience in teaching the same subjects as their mentees.

Concerned with the effects of induction and mentoring on teacher turnover and drawing on a national sample from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) administered by the National Center for Education Statistics, data in this study were analyzed by comparing teachers who entered teaching in the 1999–2000 school year who had no induction with those who experienced

varying degrees and intensity of support. The levels included (a) *basic induction*, where a beginning teacher reported having a mentor and supportive communication with school administrators; (b) *basic induction plus collaboration*, where the beginning teacher reported having a mentor in their own field and regular and supportive communication with administrators or department chairs, a common planning period or regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers in their area, and participated in a beginning teacher seminar; and (c) all of the above plus participating in an external teacher network and receiving *extra resources*—reduced instructional load, fewer preparations, a classroom aide (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004, p. 705).

Only 3% of the beginning teachers who responded to the SASS reported receiving virtually no induction support at all. Most—56%—fell in the *basic induction* category while 26% fell into the second category, *basic induction plus collaboration*. Only 1% of beginning teachers said they received extra resources, and thereby fell into the third category. The practice of offering additional resources to beginning teachers appears to be growing as is suggested by New York's 10% teaching load reduction but is much more common in other nations than in the US, England, Wales, New Zealand, and Japan for example (Howe, 2006). The percentage of *leavers* after the first year of teaching decreased with each category move—20% of those not receiving any induction support left; 18% of the beginners receiving the first, the basic *package*, left, as did 12% and 9% of those falling in the second and third categories, respectively. Of those beginning teachers who received extra resources, Smith and Ingersoll (2004, p. 705) wrote:

> The larger package further reduced the predicted rate of turnover—the predicted probability of a departure at the end of the first year for teachers receiving this package was less than half the probability for teachers who participated in no induction activities.

Of all the components, the most powerful positive influence came from "having a mentor in the same subject or collaboration with other teachers on instruction, and being part of an external network of teachers" (Smith & Ingersoll, p. 706). Hence, merely being assigned a mentor is no guarantee that positive results will follow.

This later point is underscored by a study of Garet, Porter, Desmoine, Birman, and Kwang (2001) of effective professional development involving a national sample of science and mathematics teachers drawn from the federally sponsored Eisenhower Professional Development Program—unlike the Smith and Ingersoll study, this was *not* a study of beginning teachers. The authors concluded that teachers learned more in teacher networks and study groups than with mentoring when teacher development was part of a coherent program of professional development that was job embedded, sustained and intensive and that emphasized active learning by groups of teachers

sharing a work context. In effect, the argument made was that mentoring needed to be part of a comprehensive induction program that emphasized inquiry into practice. Parallel conclusions emerge from the teacher research (Rust, 2009) and self study (Loughran, Hamilton, Laboskey, & Russell, 2004) movements which emphasize the value to professional growth of the study of one's own practice and with others. Villar and Strong (2007) underscored the point in their benefit–cost analysis of a comprehensive district program of support for beginning teachers that included released time from classroom teaching for mentors, ongoing mentor training, support for teacher networking and teacher cohorts, and consistent interaction with school administrators—a program in most respects fitting into Smith and Ingersoll's "extra resources" category. Not only did teacher retention increase significantly thereby generating large dollar returns on program investment but, the authors concluded, the "beginners resembled fourth-year teachers, thus yielding a substantial return when expressed in salary differences" (Villar & Strong, 2007, p. 14). The more important implication is that teacher learning was accelerated.

Clearly, while a mentor is crucially important to a beginner's development, mentoring, alone, is no substitute for a full program of induction. It is apparent that effective induction requires something more than what a single, thoughtful, and caring mentor alone can provide. This said, for beginners the need for support of various kinds remains, including emotional support, which mentees consistently report as the most valued outcome of being mentored (see Fletcher, Strong, & Villar, 2008).

Expanding Roles and Growing Challenges

As expectations for induction change and grow, new challenges are emerging. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) and Garet et al. (2001), in their studies, point toward some perplexing issues about mentoring: (a) What are the appropriate roles and responsibilities of mentors?, and (b) What is the mentor's job within a comprehensive induction program, the sort of program suggested by Smith and Ingersoll's third category?

By prohibiting mentors from sharing information about those they mentor with supervisors and for teacher evaluation, the teacher union and state policy-makers of New York seek to establish and maintain a distinction between professional development and growth, as the central aim of mentoring, and evaluation of performance. Clearly, mentoring always involves assessment, but the issue is who does the assessing, what forms will the assessment take, and what is to be done with assessment results? Ultimately, beginning teachers wonder, "Where does my mentor stand, is she supportive of me or not and will I be certified?" On this view, trust is the highest mentor virtue, and trust often is taken to be a matter of offering unqualified support and of the responsibility for judging teacher quality

being placed elsewhere, not with the mentor. Yet, given the current neo-liberal educational agenda, it is highly unlikely this distinction can be sustained, particularly since it relies on a view of induction that limits mentoring to a kind of priestly role and relationship, enabling confidential confession, repentance, and promising ultimate redemption–certification. Smith and Ingersoll's (2004) summary description of induction programs quoted above notes this tension, that some programs "are primarily developmental and designed to foster growth [while] others are also designed to assess and perhaps weed out" (2004, p. 683). When induction is driven by both the aim of teacher retention *and* increasing student achievement supportive mentoring relationships likely must give way to more evaluative and judgmental relations. Mentor loyalties divide. For mentors, the challenge is to learn to be helpfully and kindly critical without undermining the confidence of their mentee or the quality of their relationship. How this is to be done is no mean task. Because results of student achievement tests are public and scores on such tests are increasingly taken as proof of teacher quality, teacher evaluation must also become public. One likely outcome of this trend is that for mentors the nature of their support of their mentees may change, becoming more a matter of helping the beginning teacher prepare for student assessments and for the results and of establishing a safe distance in the event of negative outcomes. Mentors know that mentees are not the only ones judged; that their mentee's performance is also a statement about them as mentors (Bullough, 2005).

In New York, beginning teachers are offered a year of induction support. In California they are offered two years. The difference is very important, allowing in California greater time for learning and for targeted professional development. With additional time, the widely recognized survival concerns of beginning teachers are more likely to be replaced by growth concerns and more rapidly. For mentors, this difference likely makes finding an appropriate balance between support and assessment responsibilities easier and more likely to be achieved. Moreover, unlike many states, California is committed to extensive mentor education within a framework of state performance standards that are well understood by both mentors and mentees and the required Individualized Induction Plan, thus potentially softening problems arising from role confusion of the sort noted by many authors (Achinstein, 2006; Kilburge & Handcock, 2006; Sundli, 2007). Under these conditions, it becomes more likely mentors can meet the standards set by the California Formative Assessment and Support System.

Under these conditions, for both mentor and mentee, although somewhat fluid, goals come to be shared and roles reasonably well-understood. This does not mean, however, that mentoring can be reduced to a specific set of skills, as Athanases et al. (2006, p. 94) argued from their California studies:

> Generic models of mentor curriculum provide templates and starting points, but when imported into local circumstances and reified as program [sic], they likely will fall short. Research on teaching and standards for the profession repeatedly have advanced the tenet that good teaching is teaching in a context, with sensitivity to particular learners. The same tenet holds true for new teacher induction and mentor development.

Mentoring, as Awaya et al. (2003) suggested, is first and foremost a highly personal relationship involving a journey for both the beginning teacher and the mentor. In this relationship the mentor is called upon to be many persons and play many roles. Helman (2006), for example, identified three *mentoring stances*, involving efforts designed to extend beginning teacher thinking, teach specific content and practices, and promote accountability by clarifying expectations for teaching and learning. Each stance, she suggests, represents a different aim and involves a different coaching practice, tools used as they seem appropriate to nudge along the beginner's development and in support of the mentee's IIP.

The past few years, and most especially within programs strongly linked to higher education institutions and partnerships, the mentor's role increasingly is understood to have important implications not only for mentee retention, growth and development, but for changing school cultures. As Gless (2006) argued, on this view what emerges is "transformative mentoring". Supported by growing appreciation for the power of organizational learning there is a veritable explosion of interest in and growing commitment to the development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), or what Cassidy et al. (2008) refer to as *communities of educational enquiry*, as means for improving student achievement (see Mullen, 2009) and teacher well-being. On this view, and consistent with the conclusions of Smith and Ingersoll and Garet et al. about the educational value of teacher networks, beginning teachers are not so much inducted into a school as they achieve membership in one or another embedded school community of practice (see Wenger, 1998). The dyad of the mentor/mentee relationship is replaced by, or rather strengthened by, its roots within communities composed of more or less like-minded individuals who share a set of values, problems, and a way of talking about and working through those problems. Power and control reside within these communities and in them, as beginners learn what counts as effective practice, teaching identities form and evolve. Within such contexts, as Cassidy et al. (2008) argued, the tensions or "dualities" (p. 218) of a practice may best be balanced and this is so, in part, because the resources of an entire community become available and because the community has a shared work that needs doing, shared standards for what counts as adequate doing, and a stake in the beginner's success. When attempting to resolve a problem or gain increased understanding of an issue or an opportunity, both mentor and mentee are given permission to reach beyond their relationship for resources and guidance. For mentors carrying the primary, and sometimes the entire

burden, for beginning teacher growth and development, the press is to define their role primarily in terms of providing support, seeking to help the novice get through the first months of teaching, settle and find place. Potentially, a community of practice offers another, more or less complimentary but different and far richer opportunity and promise: a call to another set of values that define participation, those of inquiry.

The distinction between the two purposes is important. Darling (2003) is helpful here. She argued that within teacher education there is tension between the formation of two types of communities, one of compassion and another of inquiry. She also suggested that compassion usually wins out. In contrast, she asserted that teacher educators:

> . . . have a responsibility to model the virtues necessary for inquiry and to do our best to persuade students of their value. These virtues are indispensable to the process of learning to teach and to the practice of good teaching itself... [that] the virtues of conscientiousness (honesty, truthfulness, and so on) need to take precedence over virtues of benevolence *at certain times*. (Darling, 2003, p. 16)

The phrase, *at certain times*, is telling, suggesting, as Yusko and Feiman-Nemser (2008) argued, that assessment is essential to teacher growth and development. Tension between the support and assessment functions of mentoring is inherent in all teaching. The challenge for mentors is to enact a sensitive but dynamic and shifting balance between the two and this is best done when beginning teacher growth and development is a communal responsibility, and particularly when the mentor is recognized and respected as a fully engaged community member.

In recognition of these developments, but perhaps being overly optimistic, Howe (2006) has argued that a shift has taken place "in the notion of the roles of mentor and mentee from veteran and neophyte to co-learning and colleagues in a more collaborative environment" (p. 290). It would appear that he is correct in how mentoring is understood but not necessarily in how mentoring is practiced. There certainly is a growing research literature on social learning and on the power of learning in communities that supports the desirability of a shift of this kind. Also, there is growing appreciation of the impossibility of mentors doing alone all that is now expected of them. When mentoring meant little more than helping socialize a beginning teacher to fit comfortably into a well-understood and perhaps well-worn role, the job was often difficult and emotionally demanding but apparently doable. This no longer is the case.

Gaps

Reviewing the international literature on induction and mentoring Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, and Tomlinson (2009) concluded that little is known about

the cost-effectiveness of mentoring, how best to increase "mentees 'willingness' to be mentored, impact on student learning, how mentoring effects mentor retention and the impact on mentors of various types of training programs" (p. 213). As noted, recent research in the US has and is addressing issues of cost-effectiveness and there are beginning efforts to determine impact on student learning (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Fletcher et al., 2008). The other issues remain virtually untouched. Additional gaps of consequence in the research literature will be noted in this section.

There is only a modest literature on the potential negative effects of mentoring on mentors and mentees. Feiman-Nemser (2001) has argued that mentoring may support ineffective practice: "sometimes [mentoring] reinforced traditional norms and practices rather than promoting more powerful teaching" (p. 1031). Kilburg and Hancock (2006) conducted a large study in Oregon, involving 149 mentoring teams in four school districts that revealed several challenges. At the time mentoring in Oregon was optional and induction practices were more nearly like those of Utah than of California. About one-fourth of the 149 teams reported a variety of problems, problems that tended to come in clusters. Many of the most pressing issues originated in difficulty with placements—mentors and mentees did not share the same school, subject, specialty area, or grade level, and the mentor lacked time to observe and the team had difficulty meeting. A few mentees reported their mentors lacked communication and coaching skills and failed to give adequate emotional support. A poor *match* was the central issue, in part, no doubt, a problem resulting from a paucity of willing mentors. Questions of mentor/mentee *fit* are perplexing and when problems arise generally what beginning teachers do is seek help elsewhere by looking for an informal mentor rather than request a change in assignment (Worthy, 2005). There is something very odd about being assigned a mentor or to a mentor being assigned a beginning teacher, and not choosing or being chosen. Awaya et al. (2003) observed: "mentoring... indicates a particular kind of personal relationship in which there is some degree of choice between the parties to it" (p. 46). Issues of this sort require a good deal more study since so very much is at stake in achieving a good fit. Surely, the mentor/mentee relationship ought to represent something more than a prolonged "blind date" (Wong, 2004, p. 45).

But then, there is considerable disagreement about what is a good fit: should a mentor and mentee share not only a basic set of values but a commitment to a particular vision of teaching and of learning? Is congruence the aim? Or, rather, since learning inevitably involves a measure of tension, is there greater value in having to grapple with and confront differences of varying kinds? Then, how much difference is too much? Beginning in the 1970s this became a lively issue in studies of mentoring conducted by developmental psychologists. There are no clear conclusions but there are helpful insights offered suggesting that maintaining flexibility in placements particularly in the early stages of induction is a wise practice.

Several studies of mentoring and induction suggest that much of the induction work being done is under theorized. With some very notable exceptions, most especially studies grounded in social learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), mentoring and induction practices appear primarily to be the result of on-going and site-specific tinkering and testing, even within NTC programs. As Colley (2003) observed: "the meteoric rise of mentoring has not been matched by similar progress in its conceptualisation" (pp. 258–259). While much of the tinkering has produced impressive educational results, greater attention to the theory/practice link promises development and refinement of more powerful practices which, in turn, open the possibility of more responsive and useful theories. In particular, the work of Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998) is especially provocative yet surprisingly underappreciated. Drawing on insights from Vygotsky and Mead, Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall (1983) identified and tested a set of conditions needed for adult development in complex human-helping tasks. These conditions include: Role-taking, reflection, balance, continuity, and support and challenge (Reiman, 1999). Ironically, much of the literature makes little of an important fact, that mentoring is a matter of adult learning and that helping adults learn complex tasks in often-times threatening conditions presents unique challenges, particularly of unlearning old habits and remaking established beliefs.

As Hobson and his colleagues (2009) observed, there is surprisingly little research on how mentoring effects mentors and, more specifically, on the challenges mentors face when mentoring even though there is growing appreciation of their need for on-going support (see Achinstein, 2006). For example, only recently has attention been called to the extraordinarily complex emotional demands of mentoring (Bullough, 2009; Bullough & Draper, 2004). Moreover, rather little research has been conducted on the problem of mentor induction—the transition from teacher to mentor and how teachers become effective mentors. This issue is complicated by realization that mentors develop their own styles of mentoring and that these often reflect set teaching commitments that elevate the values of support over inquiry and limit the kind and quality of feedback and guidance given beginning teachers (Harrison, Lawson, & Wortley, 2005; Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith, & Erickson, 2005). Mentors need mentoring (Gordon & Brobeck, 2010). That being an effective teacher is a necessary but insufficient condition for becoming an effective mentor is a conclusion often ignored in state and school district-sponsored induction programs, as indicated by how mentors are frequently chosen even in New York. It is self-evident that mentoring calls for skills and knowledge, including of the politics of place, that go well beyond what is demanded of classroom teaching. Lastly, the place of mentors and mentees in professional learning communities needs exploration, since mentoring in community contexts is quite unlike mentoring in a insulated dyad.

Looking Ahead

Given hard economic times, it might be expected that state and district funding of induction programs for beginning teachers will decline. It certainly may, but thus far these programs seem mostly to be holding their own. No doubt, that there are so many fewer beginning teachers to mentor significantly lowers costs. But it is also clear that the long-term value of induction and mentoring to quality education is increasingly understood by at least some policy-makers. On many accounts, induction and mentoring represent good investments. Still, ours is a time of considerable uncertainty, and not only in funding. What seems certain is that mentoring and induction programs that formerly emphasized teacher support and development will expand to include ever greater emphasis on assessment and on student learning outcomes, even as recognition of the problems of fairly judging teacher quality based on student testing grows (Papay, 2011). Greater effort will be directed toward clarifying and specifying the roles and responsibilities of mentors, and assessing their performance will become increasingly consequential whether or not comprehensive training is available. Just as standards for acceptable performance of beginning teachers are narrowing, so will they narrow and sharpen for mentors. This said, mentoring will remain highly idiosyncratic, a matter of forging a relationship that is responsive to the needs and interests of two persons, adults, who live and work within unique, dynamic, and ever shifting contexts. Ultimately, no highly prescriptive role definition of mentoring ever can promise improved practice, although, as noted, standards and orienting guidelines can be helpful as they are in California. The research literature on induction and mentoring strongly supports the conclusion that successful induction programs are wholly people dependent, and that their success rests entirely on how effectively they enable and support learning and engagement. Such programs must not only make room for the expression of a wide range of human talent and interest but actually celebrate the differences in talents and abilities of beginning and experienced teachers rather than think of them as deficits (He, 2009). Powerful induction programs will encourage human flourishing, the quest to find and sustain a deep happiness in work. Long term, teacher retention and improved teaching is less a matter of helping a beginning teacher find a comfortable place in a school than it is a matter of creating a role and set of relationships that allow and support the full investment of the self in teaching, nothing less will do (Bullough, 2009).

Notes on Contributor

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