An Annotated Bibliography
Exploring Research Related to Mentorship
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Annotated Bibliography


Currently, many educators enter the teaching profession to be faced with the reality of highly challenging teaching assignments, possibly including a broad spectrum of courses requiring a great deal of preparation time, an unbalanced number of students with behavioral issues, or a lack of resources required to facilitate lessons. Because first-year teachers often find themselves focused only on “survival,” elevated rates of teacher turnover exist, especially in inner city schools. Thus, according to the authors, mentoring has received heightened national attention lately, and experimental design and statistical methods are increasingly being used to examine the effect of mentoring programs upon student achievement.

Specifically in this study, student standardized test scores were investigated to reveal the effect of a mentoring program involving first- and second-year educators upon their students’ achievement rates. Hierarchical linear modeling was employed, and a contrasting group used for comparison was made up of seasoned teachers in similar schools, consistent grade levels, and related content areas. More explicitly, the study involved data collected from 300 educators in grades 4 through 10, teaching 6,900 students in language arts, mathematics, and science from across the state of Alaska.

Results indicate that even though the mentorship program did not coincide with comparable student test scores in classrooms of veteran and new teachers, mentees were able to help their students achieve much higher scores than expected, based on past research, in the areas of reading, writing, and science. In the subject of mathematics, those students in classrooms of first- and second- year mentored teachers performed on similar levels to those of more seasoned teachers. Therefore, mentoring undertaken as part of the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project
demonstrates potential to begin narrowing the achievement gap often observed between students of new and veteran teachers.


Although mentoring can serve as a vital component of educators’ professional development and even correspond with increased teacher retention rates, logistical and financial setbacks frequently limit the level of interaction a mentee has with a mentoring teacher. The above-referenced investigation analyzed a school district initiative to facilitate increased interaction by enhancing traditional in-person mentoring with an electronic mentoring program. The program consisted of thirty elementary physical education teachers, each of whom participated in a year-long process that incorporated workshops, school visits, videotaped lessons, and online mentoring via chat rooms. Chat room postings provided necessary data, and these postings were analyzed for frequency of response and quality. Additionally, a series of interviews were investigated to provide supplemental information regarding teachers’ opinions about electronic mentoring.

Teacher postings were generally negligible in regards to frequency and quality. The authors of the study assumed that the chat rooms were seldom used due to teachers’ lack of enthusiasm for electronic mentoring, somewhat related to concerns regarding the technical and human aspects of the process. For example, there existed a logistical challenge of lack of computer access for some teachers. Also, teachers noted the difficulty of developing personal relationships within the electronic mentoring program. The study surmised that perhaps more training in regards to teacher expectations and methods of communicating in new ways might
eliminate some of these obstacles. The ultimate aim of the study was to offer preliminary conclusions that might serve as a foundation from which e-mentoring can be further investigated.


Although professional development opportunities for new teachers are widespread - especially in the form of mentoring - research-based evidence of the impact of such induction is fairly difficult to come by. In fact, according to this study, most of the research aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of such training highlights its impact on teacher retention. Possibly of more significance is the correlation between mentoring programs and elevated student achievement rates.

In terms of mentoring, one widespread option is between programs specified as either full-release (involving mentors employed on a full-time basis) or site-based (involving mentors currently teaching on campus). Within this study, the two mentoring choices are analyzed as utilized by a sizeable urban school district. Although mentors were offered the same training content, their programs varied in case load and time to completion. The study contains a comparison of gains in achievement by fourth and fifth grade students, who were being instructed by novice teachers. Some of these teachers were working alongside full-release mentors, and some were being supported by site-based mentors. Although the demographic characteristics of those students being instructed by teachers in the full-release group were associated with predictions of lower achievement gains, the opposite turned out to be the case. Ultimately, students taught by teachers in the full-release group achieved more positive assessment outcomes than those under the instruction of teachers in the site-based group, thus offering support for the effectiveness of this method of mentorship.

The authors of this study discuss The Lewis and Clark Discovery Project, a technology-based profession development program, in light of its goal to assist teachers in revitalizing teaching and learning procedures in the classroom, through a mentorship-based format. This six-year initiative was financed in 1999 by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Among the project’s primary focuses were the historic account of obstacles and adventures of Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery over the course of their historical journey, community studies bringing to light two centuries of development along the Lewis and Clark Trail, and the progress of technology-enhanced investigation in teaching and learning. The program involved fifty-one lead participant K-12 educators, traveling throughout eight states along the Lewis and Clark Trail, taking part in activities created to heighten technological skill and promote the expansion of investigative learning endeavors in their classrooms. The project members were effectively mentored through Internet-based courses and in summer workshops. One foundational aspect of the project was the advancement of a model to mentor teachers within the classroom setting and to assist in bringing about outreach and technology-focused peer mentoring across a variety of districts.

According to the authors, this project sparked an enduring enthusiasm for ground-breaking, long-term professional development among this network of online learners. At the completion of the project, the research team will finalize both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research conclusions, making them accessible in future articles and publications.

The authors of this study address the primary motives leading seasoned teachers to take part in the mentoring process of newly-appointed teachers. The benefits of this process for the mentor teachers are also discussed. Based upon partially structured interviews with twelve experienced teachers who participated in a university-based mentoring program in Israel, the study identified an extensive assortment of motivations, challenges, and benefits throughout the mentoring process. These included inherent and extrinsic objectives, emotional benefits, professional fulfillment, and negative ramifications.

When exploring what motivates seasoned teachers to participate in the mentoring process, the authors found that involvement in a mentoring program in Israel is voluntary. Additionally, financial reimbursement for such participation is nearly inconsequential. Also, because mentors are not relieved of their teaching responsibilities during their time spent mentoring, they must make time to participate, amidst an already demanding schedule.

However, even considering these factors, some teachers expressed a fundamental altruistic desire to aid struggling new teachers. Additionally, many mentors articulated regret over the fact that they were not fortunate enough to have mentors themselves when at the beginning of their professional careers, and they felt this led to added challenges throughout their initial acclimation period. Also, seasoned teachers who were privileged enough to have a substantial mentoring experience as novice teachers spoke of a goal to “return the favor.”

Among the study’s implications, the authors recommend that researchers and policy-makers seek to expand their awareness of the motivations and benefits for mentors, in order to underscore the possible contributions of the mentoring relationship to the mentor, to new teachers, to schools, and to society as a whole.

According to the study, the availability of computers with access to Internet in public schools of today is growing. In fact, the ratio of public school pupils to computers with Internet capabilities has increased from 12.1:1 in 1998 to 3.8:1 in 2005. However, in a great number of classrooms throughout the country, educators primarily utilize Internet technology for activities apart from the delivery of lessons, in ways that address their immediate needs and do not require additional time (such as for communicating with parents and coworkers). Potential barriers that prevent teachers from integrating student-centered approaches to technology include limited time, lack of beliefs that support the use of technology for teaching, limited access to current and operational technology, absence of appropriate professional development opportunities, and a culture that fails to promote technology use.

According to this study, a systems-based model of mentoring has been proven to overcome many of the typical hurdles to technology integration. This model contains four stages of technology integration, which are initial set-up, teacher preparation, curricular reform, and community of practice, in which the mentor trains the mentee to become a technology leader for the school. Mentors can offer teachers timely support as they attempt to incorporate technology into pertinent lessons. This study reported that ultimately, systems-based mentoring offers the hope of more effectively meeting the needs of teachers learning to utilize technology in order to augment learning, and more significantly, the needs of those students who are benefitting from the instruction.

Since the introduction of computer technology into the classroom environment, educators have been advised to incorporate technology into their teaching practices. Expounding upon this goal, the authors of this study set out to identify methods by which to integrate technology into mentorship applications. This objective was set forth while collaborating on a digital video faculty development project for educators at Georgia State University. For the study authors, this idea was first materialized in the mentoring process of a first-year teacher at Trinity School, who was asked to incorporate digital video equipment into her professional development process.

The stages of this process included recording video of the first-year teacher implementing the lesson, watching the video together with a mentor, and attempting to identify two or three key incidents, or notable occurrences, throughout the lesson. Using iMovie, the video was then edited to include only the shorter key incidents, and the mentor and mentee began reflecting upon and sharing ideas regarding these moments. From that point, the first-year teacher was better able to identify factors contributing to the importance of these incidents, as well as begin to creating a plan for improvement in future lessons. According to the authors, this reflection protocol allowed the novice teacher to gain a fresh point-of-view into her teaching methods, thus facilitating her own development professionally.

In today’s educational environment, teachers are continuously faced with increasing demands for accountability, including the implementation of high-stakes assessments, regulations, curricular standards, teaching guidelines, and performance criterion. The weight of these responsibilities can often cause first-year teachers to feel overwhelmed. Additionally, their teacher mentors are frequently affected by these pressures, leaving sparse time for the level of training that may best address educating and learning in a real-world environment.

In an effort to create modes of training that would both effectively coach new teachers, as well as invigorate seasoned mentors, a state Educational Professional Standards Board procured the assistance of instructional design specialists to create a ground-breaking online course. The primary focus of this course design was a narrative mock-up, complete with information founded in educational standards. The course offered varying outcomes, chosen by the user, as decision focuses to bolster education-centered reflection.

According to the study, these narrative simulations with varying outcomes offered mentors an opportunity to more effectively explore the intricacies that come naturally throughout the course of each day within a classroom setting, reflecting on their own decision-making processes. Both the internal and external deliberation associated with this process brought forth the quality of professional judgment rarely uncovered simply through traditional instruction. After they had traversed this route, mentors were better able to assist their mentees in developing effective problem-solving methods. It is recommended within the study that additional research and evaluation of this design should further address the extent to which this format addresses the varying learning objectives of multiple outcome simulation.

Initiated as a collaborative effort between the University of Colorado at Boulder and the Boulder Valley School District, the Boulder Valley Internet Project (BVIP) aims to integrate Internet-based activities into curriculum and instruction. Within this program, the Trainer of Trainers model was employed to form a core group of twenty-six educators who once trained, returned to their respective schools to serve as teachers and resource leaders for their coworkers. The original objectives for these initial trainers and for future groups of participants included proficiency in the use of e-mail, a high comfort-level in using the Internet to conduct research, and experience in developing means of integrating the Internet into classroom lessons. However, these goals have not been fully reached due to the impeding nature of education reform and the protracted speed of gathering fifty-three schools in the district to work collaboratively.

Even still, after the conclusion of the first year of the project, Wolf and Black of the University of Colorado were asked to lead a formal assessment using results from surveys and interviews. Their data implied that the original cohort of twenty-six teachers had been thoroughly trained. Also according to the data, these educators believed themselves to be more knowledgeable regarding the Internet applications, and they were becoming more comfortable using these new skills within the classroom setting. Although change throughout the entire district has taken a great deal of time due to the challenge of connecting teachers from more than fifty schools, the study noted that teachers continue to become more learned regarding technological applications. This is due primarily to a solid base of expertise that has been constructed via the mentorship program throughout the project’s five-year effort.

The purpose of this study was to describe the mentoring process from the point-of-view of several virtual schools that have been constructing and implementing mentoring programs to aid new teachers as they become more familiar with the profession. A virtual school teacher is defined in the article as an educator whose primary responsibility for student instruction is contained within an online course of study. The types of mentoring described include task-based mentoring (focuses on one teacher’s immediate need to grow in a single skill), experienced-based mentoring (mentee learns more about a certain role from the mentor), just-in-time mentoring (pairs mentors with mentees who might need future assistance), one-to-one mentoring (focuses on a single mentor sharing with a single mentee), team mentoring (brings groups of mentors together with groups of mentees), and formal mentoring (involved specific expectations such as timelines, progress reporting, and benchmarks).

Each school mentioned within the study has developed a mentoring process that is distinctive. In fact, all were designed specifically with the individual school’s staff, size, and instructional methods in mind. Each school found that an effectively operating mentoring program is a central agent in developing successful beginner virtual school teachers, as well as in supporting the sustained progression of more seasoned virtual school educators. Although mentoring programs have only recently been implemented in various virtual schools, it appears that they may also play a part in teacher retention. All things considered, according to the study, an effectively executed mentoring program will advantage the mentee through the acquisition of additional knowledge and skill, the mentor through the attainment of leadership and communication capabilities, and the school as a whole through the transfer of thoughts and expertise among teachers.