Significant Research and Readings on Comprehensive Induction

**Induction** is a comprehensive, coherent, and multi-year professional development process consisting of a carefully crafted array of people and activities designed to acculturate and train a new teacher to the goals and visions of a school or the school district. The goal of induction is to teach a new teacher effective teaching strategies and techniques that will improve student learning, growth, and achievement.

**Coaches** are part of a comprehensive induction program. They are qualified teachers who have been trained by a district to function as a team and to provide classrooms assistance with teachers and the students. Coaches have well-defined, goal-oriented responsibilities to improve teacher instructional skills and student learning on a sustained basis. The work they do is job-embedded in the classroom, which is how teachers learn best to become skilled and effective.

**Mentoring** is what a mentor does to provide guidance, support, and feedback to a new teacher. It is typically a one-on-one relationship that is frequently not monitored or assessed. Mentors can be fully trained by a school district or, more often than not, it is an experienced teacher who has been appointed to provide survival assistance with no academic goal in mind. If mentoring is a part of the induction process, it may be of value, but if mentors operate in sporadic isolation and have “reflective conversations,” there is no research to support this process.

**On Mentoring**

Over one million new teachers received mentoring between 1993 through 2003, but we know little about the magnitude of the benefits they have received or how the impact of mentoring varied across different types of programs.

Mentoring has become an extremely popular policy for improving the retention and performance of new teachers, but we know little about its effects on teacher and student outcomes.

Despite the popularity of mentoring, little is known about its impact on employee turnover and skill acquisition. Nearly all published and unpublished evaluations of mentoring programs have used research methodologies that fall short of providing credible estimates of the causal impacts of mentoring: Serpell (2000), Ingersoll and Kralic (2004), Lopez et al. (2004), and Strong (2005).

Mentors who share similar educational backgrounds and subject matter experience as their mentees don’t seem to have any impact, good or bad, on teacher retention or student performance—despite the fact that this type of matching is often stressed by state law and supporters of mentoring programs.

In addition to the general dearth of quality research on mentoring, even less is known about mentoring in special education (Gehrke & McCoy, 2006; et al., 2002)


The mentor-mentee relationship does have its fallacies. A few of the problems that often hinder the consistent success of the mentor-mentee concept are mentors are not available to help first-year teachers, mentors are poorly matched with mentees, sufficient time is not allocated for mentors to aid mentees, and some mentors lack the sincere commitment to assist mentees (Bauer & Leblanc, 2002; Cuddaph, 2002).

Tammy Lorraine Staten-Daniels, “How First-Year Teachers Support Their Peers,” doctoral study at Walden University, October 2009.

Mentoring has, at best, been a poorly designed and ineffectively implemented interaction between the mentor and the mentee. Far too many new teachers experience a disillusioning relationship that provides little support during this crucial stage of their career.


Our work suggests that schools would do better to rely less on one-to-one mentoring and, instead, develop schoolwide structures that promote integrated professional cultures with frequent exchange of information and ideas across experience levels.


A review of 20 years of claims about mentoring reveal that few studies exist that show the context, content, and consequences of mentoring.


Current research does not yet provide definitive evidence of the value of mentoring programs in keeping new teachers from leaving the profession.


There is no consensus on what mentors should do, what they actually do, and what novices learn as a result of mentoring. Our results did not find a relationship between mentoring and teacher retention.
Most mentoring relationships lack any structure, are not monitored, and have no adequate follow-up procedure. The mentor may not have been trained, may not teach at the same grade level or academic subject, and the mentoring relationship at times has no coherence or collaboration to any state/district/school curriculum, plan, goals, or standards.


Negative outcomes have been reported and state that unstructured buddy mentoring can have harmful results and can actually be worse than no mentoring at all.


Well documented need for supporting beginning teachers has led to a great deal of focus in the past two decades on mentoring practice in schools, however, there is little empirical evidence to support specific mentoring practices.


Currently in more than thirty states, the universal practice seems remarkably narrow: Mentoring predominates and often there is little more. In many schools one-on-one mentoring is the dominant or sole strategy for supporting new teachers, often lacking real structure and relying on the willingness of the veteran and new teacher to seek each other out. Many mentors are assigned to respond to a new teacher’s day-to-day crisis and provide survival teaching tips. Mentors are simply a safety net for the new teachers. Mentoring, in and of itself, has no purpose, goal, or agenda for student achievement. Thus, mentoring alone fails to provide evidence of the connection between well-executed professional learning communities and student learning.


Although there are occasional stories of how one person has been a successful mentor, the success of mentoring programs has been documented largely by opinion surveys. Long-term objectives, including the retention of new teachers and development of experienced ones, have had insufficient time to be realized.
The Swiss philosophy explicitly rejects a “deficit” model of mentoring, which assumes that new teachers lack training and competence and thus need mentors. Instead, there is a carefully crafted array of induction experiences for new teachers.


The evidence of stand-alone ‘mentoring as induction’ programs has been called into question. Although all districts had a mentoring program, about a third (33 percent) of the teachers were not assigned a mentor during their first year of teaching. Many teachers (27 percent) reported that they did not regularly collaborate with other teachers, nor did they visit the classrooms of more experienced teachers to observe their instruction (36 percent); 46 percent said they did not have regular contact with their principals.


The mentoring component is essential to many induction programs, but is not helpful in and of itself.


Despite the heavy emphasis on mentoring by many of the programs and by the literature on alternative certification, mentoring impacted fewer self-reported growth outcomes than either school context or coursework.


The mere presence of a guide does not improve teaching.


New teachers’ needs are so variable and immediate that the appropriate combination of expertise, experience, and cultural background is unlikely to reside in ONE mentor who is available when needed.

Mentoring is all the rage. There is some sort of deep hope on the part of everyone that if you get the right mentor, your life will be saved and you will be the teacher you remember. But the truth is that mentoring pairs seldom are anything but haphazard. They are driven by the schedule. They are often not pairs of people who really know the subjects that the individual is teaching.


Professional development programs in the United States often are sporadic, incoherent in nature, lack alignment, and have no adequate follow-up procedure. We treat professional development as isolated events (such as mentoring), and not as a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained process.


We surveyed 110 new teachers in New Jersey. While 97 percent said they had a mentor, only 17 percent of the new teachers said that their mentors ever actually watched them teach in the classroom.


While mentoring is the most widely practiced component of induction, mentoring by itself is not enough to retain and develop teachers. Mentoring programs vary widely and may do little more than ask mentors to check in with new teachers a few times per semester to chat.


Many mentoring programs lack key pedagogical content and the structural characteristics of effective professional development that are needed to produce effective teachers. There is little coordination or communication between the various mentors creating gaps and redundancies that prevent new teachers from having the ability to assess their professional needs or development.


As mentoring programs have matured, it has become apparent that caring and insightful classroom teachers do not necessarily know how to mentor new teachers. Training people for the role of mentors serving teachers is a critical aspect of any effective program. It is simply not effective to identify people as mentors and then throw them into service in that capacity.

Although mentor training can increase mentor effectiveness, many who are setting up teacher induction programs are afraid to suggest that any training might be necessary for mentors. These fears often stem from the prospect of “turning off” mentors. However, without training and support for the mentors, an induction program may be little more than a haphazard effort at pairing new teachers with veteran teachers and hoping some good will come from the match.


The most critical weak links in ineffective mentoring programs are mentor training and support. These two elements are often missing because people assume that an excellent employee will naturally make an excellent mentor. In fact that is often not the case. Mentoring is a professional practice with its own knowledge and research base, strategies, and best practices. Without access to these “tools” of effective mentoring, the quality of mentoring is frequently inadequate to produce the kind of impact that the program was designed to produce.


A search of the literature revealed that in most programs, mentor training consists of an introduction to mentoring at the beginning of the school year, perhaps followed by some kind of ongoing training. One of the shortcomings of many staff development programs is that they are ‘front-end loaded’ with little opportunity for systematic application, practice, and follow-up. One mentor related, “In my first year of mentoring, I felt like a new teacher. The information was given to us quickly, and I felt lost. You are fumbling around trying to look like a mentor, but what you really need is someone to mentor the mentor.”


This view of teaching requires an approach to new teacher induction that is different in scope and design from much of what currently passes for induction in this country: one-to-one mentoring of a novice teacher by a more experienced colleague whose primary goal is to help the novice survive the first year.

Unless we move beyond the traditional one-to-one mentoring model, we will continue to reinforce the Industrial-era practice of stand-alone teaching in isolated classrooms.


Mentoring is a useful component of induction, but only one element of a comprehensive induction system.

Mentoring alone will do little to aid in the retention of highly qualified new teachers. However, as an integral component of a structured induction program, it can be valuable. Understand that induction is ongoing and systematic, whereas a mentor may be someone who is assigned two weeks after the school year begins and may not be trained, compensated, or provided release time to help, much less be in the same building and teach at the same grade level or subject area.


Many programs provide brief mentor training and/or orientation for mentors and mentees and then send them on their way with little or no ongoing support.


Only 6 percent of new teachers received in-class mentoring or coaching at least monthly. In addition, new teachers were likely to receive superficial support (e.g., their mentor prepared or sent materials) than support that might help improve their skills and knowledge of instructional techniques and classroom management, such as observing their mentor or having their mentor demonstrate a lesson.


So called ‘mentors’ are everywhere these days, but they aren’t often given release time or a clear, compelling charge. Research has not been found that supports the systematic formation of effective teachers solely through the use of mentors, especially mentors who show up after school begins and may not have been trained, compensated, or given direction or goals to attain.


On Comprehensive Induction

Induction is a comprehensive, multi-year process designed to train and acculturate new teachers in the academic standards and vision of the district. All effective induction programs have three basic parts: 1. Comprehensive: There is an organization or structure to the program consisting of many activities and many people who are involved. There is a group that oversees the program and rigorously monitors it to be sure that it stays the course towards student learning. 2. Coherent: The various activities and people are logically connected to each other, and 3. Sustained: The comprehensive and coherent program continues for many years.

There needs to be widespread implementation of comprehensive, long-term teacher induction programs for new teachers. Induction is both a period of time and “a network of relationships and supports with well-defined roles, activities and outcomes.” Induction ought to last up to three years and include such key elements as opportunities to observe and be observed by other teachers, common planning time, and participation in a network of teachers.


Longer, SUSTAINED, and intensive professional development programs make a greater impact than shorter ones. Teachers learned more in teacher networks and study groups than with mentoring or in traditional classes and workshops.


Every district should offer a multi-year induction program that provides systematic help and support, and this cannot be done adequately by another teacher with a full-time load who drops by when time permits or when a problem arises.


The data revealed that induction supports, activities, or practices rarely exist in isolation. Collectively, getting multiple induction components had strong and statistically significant effects on teacher turnover. Moreover, we found that as the number of components in the packages increased, both the number of teachers receiving the package and the probability of their turnover decreased.


What new teachers need is sustained, school-based professional development – guided by expert colleagues. Principals and teacher leaders have the largest roles to play in fostering such experiences.


In the U.S., if new teachers receive any induction at all, it is typically delivered by a single mentor and is not well structured. The authors report on much more systematic approaches to induction that five other countries have adopted.


Sustained and intensive professional development for teachers is related to student achievement gains. Effective professional development is intensive and connected to practice, focuses on the teaching and learning of specific academic content, and builds strong working relationships among teachers.
Once on the job, all beginning teachers must learn to teach to established standards, evaluate the effects of their instruction on student performance, use student achievement data for planning and curriculum, tailor instruction to address specific learning needs, and learn how to thrive in the culture of the school. This kind of learning can only happen in comprehensive induction.


A very small number (fewer than 1% of beginning teachers in 1999-2000) had a full “basic induction + collaboration + teacher network + extra resources” package that included those four components plus three others: participating in an external network of teachers, having a reduced number of preparations, and being assigned a teacher’s aide. 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. The additive effects of the seven induction components on the likelihood of leaving were statistically significant.


A comprehensive induction program includes a combination of professional development, support and formal assessments for new teachers during at least their first two years of teaching. Such programs have proven to be highly effective in keeping quality teachers in the profession, identifying teachers who perform poorly, providing clinical training, and building a strong community of teacher learners.


Only 1 percent of beginning teachers currently receive the ongoing support that constitutes comprehensive induction when they enter the profession.

Comprehensive induction is not a stand-alone mentoring program, however, rigorous it may be.


**New teachers need from 3 to 7 years in the field to reach proficiency and maximize their student’s performance. Comprehensive induction more rapidly develops teachers, moving the skill level of a new teacher to that of a fourth-year teacher within the span of one year.**


**Induction cuts attrition rates in half.**


**Teachers who experience all the components of comprehensive induction are more likely to remain in teaching than those who only receive mentors.**


**Quality professional development is a sustained, intensive effort to improve teaching and learning. To improve instruction, professional development must be collaborative, long term, and content driven. Induction is a coherent part of other well-planned professional development activities.**

A comprehensive induction program is one of the most effective methods for retaining quality teachers. While mentoring is often equated with induction, it is actually only one piece of a comprehensive induction program, which provides an extensive framework of support and guidance for new teachers. A growing body of research demonstrates that comprehensive induction can cut attrition rates by 50 percent. Well-crafted induction programs can improve teaching quality, stem high rates of teacher attrition and, in doing so, decrease the overall costs of teacher recruitment and retention.


The professional development of new teachers yields the best results when the induction process is systematic and sustained.


A study of seven urban districts reported that the only reform effort that clearly resulted in student achievement gains had clear instructional expectations, supported by EXTENSIVE (sustained) professional development, over a period of several years.


We need to provide a comprehensive induction program that involves more than just mentors. Mentors alone cannot hope by themselves to provide the range of input, feedback, and support beginning teachers need. Well-designed induction programs include specific roles for principals, superintendents, central office personnel, the teachers’ union, parents, school board, and particularly the other staff members where the beginning teacher works.


Successful induction programs are not add-ons but are integrated into the professional practice of the school. They are conducted by a cadre of experienced classroom teachers, not just one-on-one mentors, and they depend on additional resources, both money and time – including release time for experienced teachers and staff developers and stipends to new teachers for additional training.


What keeps good teachers are structured, sustained, intensive professional development programs that allow new teachers to observe others, to be observed by others, and to be part of networks or study groups where all teachers share together, grow together, and learn to respect each other’s work.

Induction should be a stage in a continuum of teacher development. Induction should support entry into a learning community. Mentoring is a useful component of induction, but only one element of a comprehensive induction system. External networks supported by online technologies can add value. Induction is a good investment.


The Goal of Induction

The goal of induction is to teach new teachers effective teaching strategies and techniques that will improve student learning, growth, and achievement. To see how this is done, please download


Induction is the process of preparing, supporting, and retaining new teachers. An induction program is designed to acculturate new teachers to the responsibilities, missions, academic standards, and vision of the district.

In an induction program, all beginning teachers learn how to demonstrate the following:

1. Teach to established standards.
2. Evaluate the effects of their instruction on student performance.
3. Use student achievement data for planning and curriculum.
4. Tailor instruction to address specific learning needs.
5. Learn how to thrive in the culture of the school.

The Difference between Mentoring and Induction

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Comprehensive Induction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on survival and support</td>
<td>Promotes career learning and professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relies on a single mentor or shares a mentor with other teachers</td>
<td>Provides an array of activities, people and administrative support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treats mentoring as an isolated event</td>
<td>Induction is comprehensive and is part of a lifelong professional development process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited resources spent</td>
<td>Investment in an, comprehensive, coherent and sustained induction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reacts to whatever arises</td>
<td>Acculturates a vision and aligns content to academic standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term, perhaps a year</td>
<td>Long term, recurrent, sustained</td>
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These are the characteristics of a high-quality professional induction program:

- **Comprehensive** – There is a structured curriculum with many and varied activities and people.
- **Coherent** – The varied activities and people are logically connected and fit together.
- **Sustained** – The program is lifelong and runs for many years to build, nourish, and maintain a culture.

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<th>Extent of Induction Programs and Teacher Retention</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Level of Training Received</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No induction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One component (Mentoring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven components</td>
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Ingersoll’s research (above) found that a teacher who receives only the single component of mentoring is just as susceptible to leaving after one year as a new teacher who receives no induction at all.

Mentors may be fine for the first few months, but once the survival stage is over, new teachers want two things:

1) **Demonstration Classes**: They want to see other teachers teach in their classrooms and they want other teachers to come to their classrooms to see and advise them on their teaching.

2) **Networks**: They want to be part of the learning community of the school. People crave connection. Mentoring, which is a one-on-one relationship, continues the practice of teachers operating in isolation.

According to the Public Education Network (2004), researchers have identified the following components of effective induction program practices:

- Long-term planning for improving teaching and learning, aligned with the instructional philosophy of the school
- Practices aligned with professional standards as well as state and local student learning standards
- Incorporating a strong sense of institutional commitment with strong administrator support and involvement
- Participation by all new teachers, whether entering the profession from traditional or alternative pathways
- Input from beginning and veteran teachers on program design and structure
• Begin prior to, extend throughout, and continue beyond the new teacher’s first year of teaching
• Provides opportunities for inductees to visit demonstration classrooms
• Provides study groups in which new teachers can network and build support, commitment, and leadership in a learning community
• Provides adequate time and resources for implementation
• Provides reduced workloads, release time, and placement in classes with less, rather than more, demanding students
• Provides quality mentoring, with careful selection, training, and ongoing support for mentors
• Provides ongoing assessment to determine whether the program is having its desired impact


Examples of Effective Induction Programs

There are currently many examples of exemplary comprehensive, coherent, and sustained induction programs:

• The eight-year new teacher induction program of the Flowing Wells School District of Tucson, Arizona has produced more finalists or state teachers of the year than any other Arizona district. www.teachers.net/wong/APR10


• The New Teacher Induction program of the Islip (NY) Public schools has shown an increase in the number of students taking and passing the Advanced Placement Test and has resulted in 99 percent of the graduating senior class earning a New York State Regents Diploma. www.teachers.net/wong/DEC10

• The Prairie Rose School Davison in Alberta has a district-wide induction program that has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of teachers expressing an interest in administration. www.teachers.net/wong/FEB09

Coaches Are More Effective Than Mentors

When coaching is added to the staff development process, about 95% of the teachers implemented the new skill in their classroom.

Effective districts have coaches that meet with the principal on a regular basis to assess the progress of every teacher and their impact on student learning. In an effective school, everyone functions as a team with all efforts focused on student achievement.

- Mentors have Roles of being buddies.
- Coaches have well-defined Responsibilities.

**Coaches are in the classrooms with the teachers and the students. The work they do is job-embedded, which is how teachers learn best to become skilled and effective.**

**Tom Guskey’s** research describes that coaches focus on student learning goals, identify small measurable steps to tailor goal accomplishment, and plan professional development that differentiates for each teacher based on needs. The emphasis is on student learning with coaches coaching for learning.

<table>
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<th>Differences Between Mentors and Coaches</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mentors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are available for survival and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide emotional support; answer singular procedural questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>React to whatever arises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat mentoring as an isolated activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor with reflective conversations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are a buddy</td>
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Whereas a mentor is dousing brush fires as they happen in each mentee’s classroom, the coach’s path is prescribed and goal oriented.

To see how coaches coach, see

- “Coaches are more effective than mentors.” [www.teachers.net/wong/FEB08](http://www.teachers.net/wong/FEB08)
- “Importance of academic coaches.” [www.teachers.net/wong/MAR08](http://www.teachers.net/wong/MAR08)

**Teachers Want to Be Effective**

A district’s responsibility is to hire qualified teachers and then train them to be effective teachers.

New teachers want to be effective teachers. New teachers want more than a job. They want hope. They want to contribute to a group. They want to make a
difference. Induction programs provide that connection because they are structured around a learning community where new and veteran teachers are treated with respect and their contributions are valued.

Salary notwithstanding, good teachers are more likely to choose to work in schools where there will be a “critical mass” of like-minded colleagues who share their commitment to student achievement and where the principal is the key to establishing this commitment to teacher improvement and student achievement.

**Good teachers make the difference. Trained teachers are effective teachers.** Districts that provide structured, sustained training for their teachers achieve what every school district seeks to achieve – improving student learning through effective teaching.


The age-old approach of offering the next generation of teachers a one-on-one relationship appears contrary to the sensibilities of a generation of new teachers accustomed to group-learning environments.

Rather than mentoring them one on one, it would be more beneficial to create goal-oriented study groups, whereby young teachers could collaborate and develop proficiencies in curriculum and academic standards.

The U.S. education system typically views teachers as independent operators, encouraged to be creative and expected to do a good job behind closed doors. Collaboration is rare. Worse yet, new teachers seldom see another classroom in action. Loneliness and lack of support further exacerbate the frustrations of beginning teachers. To ask a Generation Y teacher to go solo in a networked world is writing that teacher’s epitaph, and it might as well read: “Doomed from the start.”

Why are we encouraging today’s K–12 teachers to create group-learning environments within their own classrooms while simultaneously telling those same teaching professionals they will learn best in one-on-one mentoring programs? Accustomed to social networking and collaborative environments, today’s young educators seem naturally inclined toward group structures.


The teachers we hire today will become the teachers for the next generation. Their success will determine the success of an entire generation of students. We can no longer condone the shortsighted practice of giving a new teacher a mentor and instructing them to reflect, one-on-one in isolation, with no coherence to or collaboration with any state, district, or school curriculum, plan, goals, or standards.

We know that student learning is directly linked to teacher effectiveness, which begins with an organized and structured process called induction. Induction programs have clearly articulated goals, administrative supervision, long-term objectives, networks that allow for structural and nurturing collaboration, demonstration classes where teachers can observe and be observed, portfolio assessments to assess pedagogical knowledge and skills, and effective coaching.
The entire process is rigorously monitored and evaluated and it flows seamlessly into a sustained lifelong professional development process. That is why comprehensive induction is the foundation of a coherent and sustained professional development process from which we can go beyond.