Danish University Colleges

Mentoring, a key element in teacher induction programs.

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Abstract:

Mentoring, a key element in teacher induction programs.

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Network: Guidance and Counselling

Research topic/aim and relevance for Nordic educational research:

The research project Induction programs and mentoring is carried out by Research Center VIA Profession and Education\(^1\) as part of the program: Mentoring and counselling.\(^2\) The aim of the project is to provide part of the basis on which a Danish induction program for beginning teachers can be developed. This paper focus on the part of the project related to mentoring as a key element in induction programs and is based upon the research question:

- What are the documented influence of mentoring as a key element in induction programs sustaining beginning teachers in a lifelong professional career development?
- What kind of mentoring-elements are supporting new teachers’ professional development and which mentoring-skills are essential to sustaining beginning teachers?

Theoretical framework:

The theory behind induction holds that pre-employment teacher preparation is insufficient to provide all of the knowledge and skill necessary to successful teaching and a significant part can only be acquired while on the job\(^3\).

Mentoring is one of the key elements in teacher induction programs. The goal of mentoring programs is to give newcomers a local guide, but the content and character of the programs vary widely\(^4\).

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\(^1\) The research project is a collaboration between Research Center VIA Profession and Education and The Danish Union of Teachers.

\(^2\) The other parts of the project consist of a) Individual and group focused qualitative interviews with beginning teachers b) designing and carrying out a survey addressing beginning teachers. Both projects examining the beginning teachers experiences in their first years of teaching.

\(^3\) (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011)

\(^4\) (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011)
Methodology/research design:

We use a design-based research approach (DBR). Based on our analysis we will propose a possible prototype for mentor practice intended to support beginning teachers. The first phase of DBR contains an analysis in which we have used a qualitative meta synthesis as a method.

Expected conclusions/findings

The work is in progress. Preliminary findings shows:

Mentoring—programs

- Promote increased retention
- Reduce feeling of isolation, increase confidence and self-esteem, professional growth, improve self-reflection and problem-solving capacities
- Have a positive impact on the classroom management skills and ability to manage time and workloads
- Have a positive impact on students achievement

Mentoring is most effective when:

- Mentors have received training as mentors
- Mentors teach the same subject as their mentees
- It is responsive to the needs of the mentee
- It takes place within schools which are characterized by collegial and learning cultures

References

5 (Brandon et al., 2014)
6 (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007)
8 (Hobson et al., 2009)(Greenfield, 2015)
9 (Hobson et al., 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Jian Wang et al., 2008; Shockley et al., 2013)
10 (Hobson et al., 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Jian Wang et al., 2008; Shockley et al., 2013)
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