

Mentoring vs. induction programs

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Mentoring vs. Induction Programs AED/201 April 10, 2011 Audrey E. Lane

Mentoring vs. Induction Programs Many new teachers are not prepared when they enter the system as an educator. Some did not anticipate the heavy work load, low pay, stress or lack of resources that comes with teaching and as a result 15 percent of teachers leave the field after their first year

(Kauchak). Some districts and states have come up with plans to help keep new teachers and lower that turnover rate. Two such programs are mentoring programs and induction programs. Many people confuse these terms or think they are the same, when in fact, they are very different.

Mentoring means to serve as a trusted counselor or teacher to another person. A good mentor is a single person who is there for the new teacher to help them survive their first year in the field. The mentor should be available to help the new teacher overcome common obstacles such as lesson planning, disruptive students and teaching techniques. While mentoring is effective it does have its limitations; the mentor usually has their own responsibilities to take care of and time between the two teachers is often limited. Additionally, with only one source to turn to information may not always be accurate and feedback is not always provided. An induction

program, on the other hand, is a process to help a new teacher not only survive in his or her environment but also to thrive in it. A good induction process can include a thorough orientation process, a highly qualified mentor, frequent reviews, and frequent meetings to discuss problems, a structured curriculum plan and time to observe senior teachers. Although this program may seem far superior it is also far more costly than a simple mentoring program. In order to determine which type of program is better

we need to turn to the facts; mentoring focuses on survival while induction promotes professional development. Mentoring relies on a single person to provide an unbelievable amount of knowledge while induction offers several sources of support for the new teacher (Pan and Mutchler). In addition, mentor programs are generally for first year teachers only while induction programs last several years (Pan and Mutchler). Therefore, it is clear that, while mentoring is a beneficial and important part of a new teachers training, mentoring should be used in conjunction with an induction program to yield the best results. An extensive induction program helps to create and retain quality teachers. These programs set clear expectations and responsibilities for these new teachers. The programs provide ongoing support and development. While a mentoring program may utilize extra time for feedback and questions, an induction program sets aside a specific amount of time regularly for that purpose. Also, most mentoring programs provide mentors based on seniority or availability while an induction program only provides mentors who pass specific guidelines resulting in higher quality training. These types of programs came into widespread use in the early 1990's and at that time 40 percent of new teachers were involved in one of these programs. Now over 80 percent of new teachers are involved in either an induction or mentoring program for their first one to three years of teaching (AASCU). A new study performed by the National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing shows a 50 percent improvement in attrition among teachers who participated in an induction program. In addition this study showed that although induction programs cost more money than mentoring alone, in the end induction programs

brought in more than was invested (AASCU). There are no federal guidelines to ensure these programs are available to new teachers; instead that responsibility falls to the local state and district and, sadly, these programs are often forgotten. There are currently 30 states that have induction programs available and of those 30 only a few are mandated (Ladd, H.). Some require that the mentor and mentee have a minimum amount of time to meet while others require that both teachers teach in the same grade, school or subject (AASCU). Many states do not even require that the mentor be compensated for his or her work (AASCU). These programs are designed to enable new teachers, give them several resources to turn to and give them ample opportunity to thrive. New teachers who are able to participate in these programs can turn to their mentor and other school officials for help or advice. These teachers are able to improve themselves because they are provided with regular feedback. With all of these additional resources plus more these teachers can reach their full potential far faster than teachers without the program. This makes them stronger, more knowledgeable and more valuable assets to any school. By taking part in a mentoring or induction program as a paraprofessional I will be the mentee and I plan to use these types of programs to my advantage. I can work in a teaching environment alongside an experienced teacher so that I have a better understanding of the education field. I will be able to see the day to day tasks that need to be accomplished and how that experienced teacher accomplishes them. I will be able to obtain valuable teaching skills such as planning tips and control of the classroom before I am left to do it on my own. These programs are gaining popularity and there is no doubt that

they are effective when implemented properly. However, the consistency and overall implementation of these induction or mentoring programs leaves much to be desired. These programs should be used by all schools in all states. Furthermore, these programs should be more strongly and equally mandated. In order to be successful these programs need to run for at least the first two years with new teachers, the mentors need to be top professionals and adequate time needs to be set aside for questions and planning. If these things can be accomplished equally across the nation, our teachers of tomorrow will be able to be better teachers faster, our children will have a higher quality education and our country can stop spending money to train new and inexperienced teachers by retaining the quality ones we have. References AASCU. (2006). Teacher Induction Programs: Trends and Opportunities. Retrieved on January 31, 2009 from American Association of State Colleges and Universities website; http://www.aascu.org/policy_matters/v3_10/default.htm Kauchak, D. & Eggen, P. (2005). Developing as a Professional. Retrieved on January, 31, 2009 from Introduction to Teaching: Becoming a Professional. Ladd, H. (2007). Teacher Labor Markets in Developed Countries. Retrieved on January 31, 2009 from;