

Nau te rourou, Naku te rourou . . . Educative mentoring

A paper from Executive

1 Background

This is the third PPTA Conference paper on mentoring in almost as many years.¹ Starting from a broad-based discussion and recommendations about different types of mentoring for a range of teachers, there has been a gradual, informed shift towards a more focused consideration of educative mentoring. Led by trained mentors, using processes that mesh with a school's existing policies and practices, and grounded in a shared approach to development of and collaboration with colleagues, educative mentoring offers a powerful lever to develop and support quality teaching in secondary and area schools.

2 What is educative mentoring?

2.1. The New Zealand Teachers Council defines an educative mentoring approach as:

*a shift away from a view of induction as 'advice and guidance' to one of skilled facilitation of 'learning conversations' focusing on evidence of teachers' practice. Rather than just providing 'advice' and emotional support, the mentor teachers co-construct professional learning, where often the learning is reciprocal.*²

2.2. Writing in the *American Journal of Education*, Sharon Schulle says:

*Educative mentoring means mentors purposefully and intentionally shape learning opportunities for novices that lead toward better understanding of teaching, learning, and learning to teach.*³

2.3. Mentoring is a learned skill; it requires experienced practitioners to build on their existing body of teaching practice and develop expertise in working alongside colleagues.

3 The Teachers Council's induction and mentoring pilots

3.1. The Teachers Council has funded several mentoring pilots – in early childhood education, primary, secondary and Māori-medium settings – which have been evaluated and reported on.⁴

¹ See 2008 and 2009 PPTA Conference papers and proceedings.

² New Zealand Teachers Council, 'Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers', New Zealand Teachers Council, <http://www.teacherscouncil.org.nz/prt/inductionandmentoringguidelines.stm#Introduction>, retrieved 23 August 2011. For a more comprehensive description of educative mentoring, see appendix two on this web page.

³ Sharon A Schulle, 'The professional practice of mentoring', *American Journal of Education* (vol 115, 2008), pp 140–1 (also available at <http://education.missouri.edu/orgs/mper/fellows/files/professional%20practice%20of%20mentoring.pdf>)

⁴ New Zealand Teachers Council, *Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers*, New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011, p 23

- 3.2. The secondary induction and mentoring pilot, developed and supported by the Centre for Education Development at Massey University, was based in six paired schools, in Taranaki, Manawatu and Hawke's Bay. Each school had a team of experienced teachers involved, who worked with the specialist classroom teacher and the co-ordinator for provisionally registered teachers to develop a school-specific approach to the pilot. That approach was then 'hard-wired' into the school's policies and practices.

4. The need for mentor training

4.1. How it worked in the secondary induction and mentoring pilot

The secondary school teams were supported by advisors from Massey University's Centre for Education Development, through school visits, online and at induction and mentoring pilot workshops and conferences. The secondary teachers involved in this pilot did not complete a formal qualification in mentoring (although the Massey advisors did), but they were required to follow an organised programme of skill development, training and reflection that had been developed by the Centre for Education Development.

4.2. Mentor training and qualifications currently available

The Centre for Education Development currently offers inservice training to mentors based on its work developing the secondary induction and mentoring pilot programme.⁵ For teachers outside the Centre for Education Development catchment, there are distance-learning mentoring papers available through Waikato and Massey universities.⁶ For teachers in Auckland, the University of Auckland is offering a mentoring programme in 2012.⁷

4.3. Using or extending study grants to support mentor training

There are 100 study support grants available each year to teachers in secondary schools (and a further 12 for teachers in area schools), offering 0.16 time release and a partial fees rebate for teachers undertaking part-time study. These study grants are ideally suited to teachers who wish to develop their skills and qualifications as mentor teachers. PPTA may wish to pursue an increase in the number of these study grants, with the specific purpose of supporting mentor training for experienced teachers.

⁵ Massey University, '2011 Courses – Kura, Primary and Intermediate Schools', Massey University, <http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/subsidiaries-commercial-ventures/centre-educational-development/2011---primary-professional-development/mentor-teachers/en/coaching.cfm>, retrieved 23 August 2011

⁶ University of Waikato, 'Developing Educational Leadership: Coaching and Mentoring', University of Waikato, <http://papers.waikato.ac.nz/subjects/EDLD/PROF507>, retrieved 23 August 2011; Massey University, '254.319 Role of the Associate and Tutor Teacher', Massey University, http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course-paper/paper.cfm?paper_code=254.319, retrieved 23 August 2011

⁷ University of Auckland, 'Faculty of Education: Mentoring Programme', University of Auckland, <http://www.education.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/home/about/centres/professional-development-centres/ecps/mentoring-programme>, retrieved 23 August 2011

5. Mentor teachers and career progression

5.1. Mentoring as a key development area for experienced teachers

It is important to value the work of trained mentor teachers and to recognise the time that is needed to provide educative mentoring in schools. Trained mentor teachers should be able to access a 0.16 time allowance, renewable annually, according to a school's staffing requirements and turnover. It should be noted that schools in the secondary induction and mentoring pilot found that, once trained, mentor teachers were able to work with a range of staff, including those who were new to the school (whether provisionally registered teachers (PRTs), overseas-trained teachers, or new to the school) and those who were taking up new roles (such as HODs).

5.2. The need for mentoring skills in middle and senior managers

PPTA is aware that every year in schools a range of professional and employment issues reach a point where field staff support and intervention is required. Often this is because middle and senior managers do not have the skills or training to conduct difficult conversations with staff. Mentor training equips experienced teachers with a range of skills to help them to work effectively with colleagues in a range of situations – including difficult conversations – and in ways that enable professional relationships to be respected and maintained. These skills are also critical to effective middle and senior leadership in secondary and area schools.

5.3. National Aspiring Principals' Programme and First Time Principal – the mentoring precedent

The Ministry of Education has made it a requirement of the National Aspiring Principals' Programme (NAPP) and First Time Principal (FTP) programme that the prospective principal be mentored. This is because it recognises that quality mentoring is a key component in supporting the ongoing change and development of school leaders. The NAPP and FTP programmes engage external mentors (advisors and/or experienced school leaders) to work with programme participants on a one-to-one basis and in small groups. Mentors ensure that participants are able to make useful links between the theory component of the programmes and school-based implementation. They also act as sounding boards and support participants to reflect on their practice.

6. Provisionally Registered Teachers: the right to a quality programme of induction and mentoring

6.1. Teachers Council induction and mentoring guidelines

The Teachers Council's new induction and mentoring guidelines have now been published in booklet form and on the Teachers Council website.⁸ Every school should have received copies of the guidelines.

⁸ Teachers Council, *Professional Learning Journeys*. See also <http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/prt/inductionandmentoringguidelines.stm>

6.2. Teachers Council induction and mentoring guidelines workshops

The Teachers Council is running workshops to help middle and senior leaders become familiar with the new induction and mentoring guidelines.

The Guidelines provide professional leaders, mentor teachers and others supporting provisionally registered teachers with the essential features of high quality induction and mentoring, and describe the key skills and attributes required for effective mentoring.⁹

6.3. How to hard wire the induction and mentoring pilot into a school's systems

The notion of 'hard wiring' means ensuring that all aspects of induction and mentoring are integrated into a school's regular business. For example, induction and mentoring pilot meetings would be automatically included in a school's meeting cycle; the appraisal processes would take account of the needs of provisionally registered teachers as well as experienced teachers; all staff would be aware of the school's professional learning and development and appraisal cycles, which are informed by the annual plan, and so on. As part of good organisational practice, induction and mentoring programmes need to be reviewed annually and adapted as required.

7. The Network Learning Communities model for supporting mentor teachers

7.1. The Network Learning Community model and New Zealand Curriculum implementation

Network Learning Communities (NLCs) were put in place with Ministry of Education funding and advisory support as part of the New Zealand Curriculum implementation. They have proved to be a useful local model that helps teachers to work collaboratively, across schools, to develop and reflect on changes to pedagogies and practice.¹⁰

7.2. A model for a mentoring community

Accent Learning is supporting an induction and mentoring NLC in the Wellington region. This community is open to primary and secondary school teachers and school leaders, and offers a forum for developing good practice using the Teachers Council induction and mentoring guidelines, and for mentor teachers to share new knowledge and experiences.¹¹ The members of this NLC meet twice each term.¹²

⁹ New Zealand Teachers Council, 'Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Workshop', New Zealand Teachers Council, <http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/prt/InductionandMentoringworkshops.stm>, retrieved 23 August 2011

¹⁰ Accent Learning School Support, 'Networked Learning Communities 2011', Accent Learning, <http://www.accent.ac.nz/school-support/articles/networked-learning-communities-2011>, retrieved 23 August 2011

¹¹ Although open to primary and secondary teachers, this NLC does not currently have any secondary participants. A secondary NLC focused on Registered Teacher Criteria (RTC) is also under way.

¹² Some NLCs also use online forums to support members between face-to-face meetings.

7.3. Funding Network Learning Communities

Currently the Ministry of Education funds NLCs up to a maximum of \$5000 per year. There is no certainty whether funding will continue under the changes to the ministry's Professional Learning and Development contracts from 2012.

8. Summary

- 8.1. There are a number of steps already in place to support the development of sound mentor training and practices in secondary schools. The Teachers Council has developed and trialled the induction and mentoring guidelines; Massey University's Centre for Education Development has written up the findings of the secondary school induction and mentoring pilot and continues to support schools to implement mentor training and improved induction and mentoring programmes; and there are study support grants in place which may be used by teachers wishing to become trained mentors.
- 8.2. By supporting the recommendations below, PPTA members will send a clear message that the types of mentoring described in this paper offer improved career pathways for experienced teachers and better practices around supporting provisionally (and other) registered teachers. In recognition of their demonstrated benefits, there is a further recommendation that PPTA call for enhanced support and funding for mentor training and school-based mentoring.

Recommendations

1. That the report be received.
2. That PPTA endorse the Teachers Council induction and mentoring guidelines.
3. That PPTA encourage members to apply for study grants to support teachers to gain mentor qualifications and/or training.
4. That, during the next round of STCA and ASTCA bargaining, PPTA seek to have the number of study grants extended to support teachers to gain mentor training and qualifications.
5. That, during the next round of STCA and ASTCA bargaining, PPTA seek to gain 0.16 time allowances for use by trained mentor teachers.
6. That PPTA seek an amendment to the wording of clause 3.8A.4 in the STCA to better reflect that the role of mentor may be filled by a suitably trained (and matched) teacher within a school, and may not necessarily be confined to a suitable colleague within a curriculum area.



7. That PPTA call on the Ministry of Education to extend (or re-establish) the role of external advisors to support the work of mentor teachers and PRT co-ordinators in secondary and area schools.
8. That PPTA deplore the Government's decision to cut back provision of regional school support services for secondary and area schools, and the Ministry of Education's failure to adhere to its own best evidence synthesis research advice about quality professional learning and development for teachers.