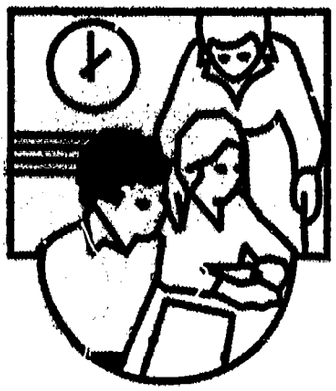
DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 318 732 SP 032 352

TITLE	Bridges to Strength: Establishing a Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers; An Administrator's Guide.
INSTITUTION	Appalachia Educational Lab., Charleston, W. Va.; Tennessee Education Association, Nashville.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Dec 88
NOTE	32p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325 ($4.00).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrators; *Beginning Teacher Induction; *Beginning Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; *Mentors; *Program Development; Role Models; Teacher Administrator Relationship

ABSTRACT

This handbook assesses the tasks of school leaders in developing a successful mentoring program in their schools. Information is provided on: (1) identifying essential components of effective mentoring programs; (2) responsibilities of the building principal, mentors, and beginning teachers; (3) funding arrangements, including alternatives to mentor compensation; (4) qualities and responsibilities of effective mentors; (5) processes to enhance program acceptance and increase voluntary mentor participation; (6) key areas of training for mentors; and (7) ways for administrators to demonstrate support for the mentoring programs. A summary is provided on components of effective mentoring programs supported by research literature. (JD)



Bridges to Strength:
Establishing a Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers, an Administrator's Guide

A Joint Study by the

Tennessee Education Association
598 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

and

Appalachia Educational Laboratory
P. O. Box 1348
Charleston, West Virginia 25325

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Funded by the

OERI

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U. S. Department of Education
Washington, D. C.

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This publication is based on work sponsored wholly or in part by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U. S. Department of Education, under contract number 400-86-0001. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of OERI, the Department, or any other agency of the U. S. Government.

These materials are issued in draft form for developmental purposes.

AEL is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Members of the TEA-AEL Study Group on Mentor Programs assumed responsibility for the planning, research, and writing of this document. Their commitment to a product of quality and practical value to Tennessee educators was evidenced through each stage of development. Members of the study group are:

Barbara Abrams, Shelby County Schools

Carolyn Abernathy, Giles County Schools

Jan Hayes, Middle Tennessee State University

Ida Martin, Metro Nashville Schools

Assistance was also provided by Tennessee Education Association staff:

Gloria Dailey, Instruction and Professional Development Coordinator

Al Mance, Assistant Executive Secretary

Appalachia Educational Laboratory staff who contributed include:

Pat Cahape
Pam Coe
Peggy Dent
Jane Hange
Donna Kirk
Carolyn Luzader
Maryrita Miller

The Tennessee Education Association hosted the study group meetings. Development of the three informal surveys involved three study group members—Jan Hayes, Carolyn Abernathy, and Barbara Abrams. Survey responses from educators in Giles County, Shelby County, and those enrolled in surveyed classes at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN, are appreciated.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mentor teacher may be described as a highly competent teacher role model willing to provide assistance to beginning teachers by observing and providing feedback; demonstrating effective instruction; and conducting orientation, training, and formative evaluation. Mentoring is occasionally provided informally by colleagues, but too often beginning teachers receive little or no guidance. By establishing a mentoring program for beginning teachers and teachers new to the district, administrators can assist these teachers in developing skill and confidence and can provide a rewarding leadership role for staff who serve as mentors.

Recognizing the potential of such a program for assuring quality instruction for students, the Tennessee Education Association, in association with the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, established a study group to develop publications that enable educators to organize or participate in a mentoring program. The study group decided to produce research-based handbooks on effective mentoring programs, practices, and guidance for beginning teachers. *Bridges to Strength: Establishing a Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers, an Administrator's Guide* addresses tasks of school leaders in developing a successful mentoring program for beginning teachers within their schools.

The need for mentor programs for beginning teachers has emerged from factors such as:

- increased demand for better quality in teacher training,
- high rate of attrition among beginning teachers,
- stresses on beginning teachers which impede professional growth,
- the need for professional renewal and recognition among experienced teachers, and
- replication of successful models of mentor programs in business.

Bridges to Strength: Establishing a Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers, an Administrator's Guide offers assistance to administrators in the planning and implementation of a mentoring program by:

- outlining essential components of effective mentoring programs;
- listing responsibilities of the building principal, mentors, and beginning teachers;
- describing funding arrangements, including alternatives to mentor compensation;
- identifying qualities and responsibilities of effective mentors;
- suggesting a selection process to enhance program acceptance and increase voluntary mentor participation;
- presenting key areas of training for mentors, and
- specifying ways administrators can demonstrate support for the mentoring programs.

Finally, the handbook summarizes those components of effective mentoring programs that

were identified in a survey of Tennessee mentors and beginning teachers. These components are supported by research literature.

Bridges to Strength: Establishing a Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers, an Administrator's Guide is one of a three-part series on assistance to beginning teachers developed by the TEA-AEL study group. School personnel involved in the organization of a mentoring program also may find useful *Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Beginning Teacher's Handbook* and *Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Mentor Teacher Resource Book*. Contact TEA at 615/242-8392 or AEL at 304/347-0400 for availability information on either publication.

Let Us Hear From You

Readers are asked to complete the product assessment form included in this guide and return it to the Appalachia Educational Laboratory. AEL welcomes your ideas regarding the usefulness of this publication and any suggestions for revision.

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Why Do We Need Teacher Induction or Mentoring Programs?

The next decade will bring many changes to the teaching profession. Some of these changes have already begun. Discontent with education in public schools has brought the educational system into the limelight since 1983. Politicians have picked up on educational concerns, recognized the need for quality education, and incorporated the issues into their platforms.

Strengthening teacher education programs has been one focus of concern. In many states, the response has been to develop beginning teacher induction programs. These programs have other names, such as mentoring systems, peer coaching models, or beginning teacher assistance programs. Regardless of the name, their main function is to improve the skills of the beginning teacher by offering personal and professional support as the new teacher gradually assumes autonomy in the classroom.

Needs of Beginning Teachers

Beginning teachers often have many varied teaching problems (Veenman, 1984). They need moral support for, and guidance and feedback on, their teaching performance. Frequently cited areas of weakness for many beginning teachers are discipline or classroom management, lesson planning, and school routines. Most beginning teachers feel isolated and seldom seek assistance from others (Glidewell, Tucker, Todi, and Cox, 1983).

According to Veenman (1984), most stress for beginning teachers comes from hiding weaknesses. Beginning teachers feel uncomfortable revealing their problems, which they fear may be perceived as personal or professional inadequacies. Veenman's review of the literature on beginning teachers found the following areas to be specific problems: discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students, dealing with heavy teaching loads, developing collegial relationships, planning lessons, and preparing for the school day (Veenman, 1984). Teachers, in Veenman's view, need to feel a sense of belonging or "fitting in." Support for beginning teachers is a strong element of any mentoring plan.

While many believe the function of teacher induction programs is the improvement of the teaching performance of beginning teachers, teacher retention is also a major goal of states and school systems that have begun such programs. Schlechty and Vance (1983) found that about 15 percent of first year teachers leave at the end of the first year, 15 percent leave after the second year, and 10 percent after the third year. During the first seven years of teaching 40 to 50 percent drop out. At their best, teacher induction programs can provide support systems that encourage perseverance and the sharing of solutions to common problems, thus reducing the stress that can lead to dropping out of teaching.

Historical Perspective

A variety of teacher induction programs has been implemented by various state and local education agencies. This section briefly describes some of these efforts.

The California Mentor Teacher Program began in 1983 by legislative mandate. Its purpose is to "upgrade the quality of instruction in California's schools" (Wagner, 1985). Other goals are:

to encourage teachers currently employed in the public school system to pursue excellence within their profession, to provide incentives to teachers of demonstrated ability and expertise to remain in the public school system, and to restore the teaching profession to its position of primary importance within the structure of the state educational system. (Wagner, 1985, p. 28)

Mentors are selected for one-, two-, or three-year terms to work in staff development with new teachers and other career teachers. Mentors are nominated by teacher committees and teach at least 60 percent of the time.

By law, California mentors must:

- be credentialed classroom teachers in their districts;
- have substantial recent experience in classroom instruction; and
- have demonstrated exemplary teaching ability as indicated by effective communication skills, subject-matter knowledge, and mastery of a range of teaching strategies necessary to meet needs of pupils in different contexts. (Wagner, 1985, p. 25)

The California law assumed that the primary function of the mentor would be assisting and guiding new teachers. In practice, they also provide guidance and assistance on school improvement projects with other experienced teachers. Secondary functions include staff development and development of special curricula. Under no circumstances do mentors participate in personnel evaluations (Wagner, 1985). The five most commonly assigned mentor responsibilities noted by Wagner (1985) are:

- staff development or consultation with individual teachers by request,
- conducting or facilitating school- or district-level staff development,
- assisting teachers in locating and organizing curriculum materials,
- curriculum development in high priority areas, and
- classroom or other assistance to beginning teachers.

As of this writing, 34 states have some type of statewide beginning teacher program. Some of these programs are exclusively evaluative in nature based on classroom observations and a summative evaluation to determine continued employment. Other programs provide some type of formative evaluation and assistance, often incorporating a mentor or peer teacher component. The IPD (Instruction and Professional Development) *State Database on the Impact of Education Reform on Teacher Professionalism* (National Education Association, Professional Library, 1988) has listed the following states as having either a mentor or peer teacher component: Alabama, California, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Briefly, some state efforts have included:

- Kansas began an entry year assistance program in 1982. In this program beginning teachers have opportunities to interact with other teachers, including observations in other classrooms (Association of Teacher Educators National Commission on the Teacher Induction Process & Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, 1986).
- The Mississippi Reform Act of 1982 included staff development. The plan provides each beginning teacher with a support team of peer, principal, and/or teacher-administrator selected from a state-trained evaluator pool (Association of Teacher Educators, 1986).
- New York is piloting several models of their Internship/Mentor Teacher Program in an effort to attract and retain new teachers (NEA Professional Library, 1988).
- Oklahoma has established an Entry Year Assistance Committee to provide guidance

and assistance for entry-year teachers. The teacher-consultant member of the committee spends 72 hours with the new teacher in consultation and observation (Newton, T. 1987).

- The Indiana Mentor/Internship Program, implemented in the 1988-89 school year, established the role of mentor as that of a coach who offers assistance to the beginning teacher, but plays no part of the end-of-year evaluation of the beginning teacher. The State Board of Education provides preschool training for mentors and administrators (Jim Claxton, personal communication, December 15, 1988).

In addition to these state plans, many individual school systems have begun teacher induction programs. Atlanta Public Schools began such a program as early as 1965.

In Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), applicants for mentoring are required to display evidence of the following abilities:

> *Communicate well in writing, model exemplary teaching, prepare and deliver workshops for adults, lead others, build trusting relationships, and complete mentor tasks.* (Wagner, 1985, p. 26)

> *Mentors in LAUSD are offered two weeks of training that includes "adult learning theory, curriculum implementation, instructional methodology, peer observation, and coaching."* (Wagner, 1985, p. 26)

A variety of mentoring programs exist. Because the role of the mentor is defined so differently in individual programs and experience with such programs is still limited, readers are encouraged to contact personnel in district or state departments of education named above for specific information. An issue in all programs is careful mentor selection and training. The next section of this report provides guidelines on program design, with an emphasis on mentor selection and training.

Designing a Mentoring Program

The Tennessee State Board of Education has recommended the use of teacher mentors to assist beginning teachers (1988b). Many Tennessee school systems will undoubtedly be planning mentoring programs in the near future; others have completed the planning stage and some have begun implementation. The following considerations may serve as a guide to planning and implementation.

Identify Essential Components

Eight variables have been identified by A. E. Newton (1987) as important to the development and implementation of an effective teacher mentor program. They are:

- an adequate timeline for developing and implementing plans;
- participation of teachers, administrators, educational organizations, and community members in planning and implementing programs;
- development of a fair process for selecting mentors, with systematic procedures that are clearly articulated and adhered to in practice;
- provision of training for mentor teachers that enables them to carry out their new role effectively (e.g., imparting knowledge of adult learning theory, team building, and the role of a change agent; skills in group leadership and facilitation, group problem-solving, observation, and conferencing; role modeling and collaboration; coaching; and counseling);
- provision of ongoing administrative support;
- availability of sufficient funding to cover the costs inherent in the program as well as to study its effectiveness;
- time built into the schedules of beginning teachers and mentors to allow them to observe each other's teaching and to confer with one another after observations; and
- assignment of beginning teachers to mentors located in the same building and, if possible, teaching the same subject or grade.

Establish Roles and Responsibilities

Central administrative support is essential to the success of a mentoring program. However, many of the key functions can be designed and implemented at the school level. Administrators should clearly establish the roles and responsibilities of all staff involved. Mentoring program responsibilities often include the tasks listed below.

Building Prinicipal:

Discuss mentoring program purposes, roles, responsibilities, and incentives with faculty.

Identify potential mentors (refer to "Mentor Responsibilities, Selection, Training, and Assignment" included in this booklet).

Request voluntary involvement in the mentoring program of potential mentors and beginning teachers.

Assign mentors to beginning teachers (one to one ratio recommended).

Define roles of the principal, mentors, and beginning teachers.

Define operational procedures.

Adjust schedule to accommodate time needed for mentoring activities. Arrange release time opportunities when needed.

Evaluate effectiveness of the mentoring program.

Mentor:

Agree to serve as a mentor.

Attend training in mentoring and/or other communication/teacher effectiveness areas.

Meet with other mentors and beginning teachers to identify strategies to be used in the mentoring process.

Meet formally and informally with the beginning teacher, and establish a positive and supportive relationship.

Schedule conference/assistance time with the beginning teacher outside regular school hours, if necessary.

Schedule in-class observation and coaching sessions.

Provide feedback on the mentoring program.

Beginning Teacher:

Participate in the local mentoring program, which may include orientation/training sessions.

Observe mentor and/or other teachers teaching.

Try classroom techniques mutually agreed upon during mentoring conferences.

Ask questions of the mentor or principal as necessary and provide feedback on the mentoring program.

Secure Funding or Alternative Resources

A critical element of any mentoring program is funding adequate to allow intensive interaction between mentor teacher and beginning teacher and to document the effectiveness of the program. In their 1987 study, Hawk and Robards state that the major road block to implementation of a statewide teacher induction program (STIP) is inadequate funding. A majority of the states were, at the time of this study, at some stage of involvement with teacher induction programs. By 1986, 15 states were in the program planning stage, 6 were piloting programs, and 10 were implementing fully developed programs (Hawk and Robards, 1987). Nine of the STIPs were formed by legislative mandates. All programs reviewed provided support to beginning teachers (also referred to as proteges) in diverse ways. Hawk and Robards add that mentors (also referred to as peer, consultant, or support teachers) are part of the assistance teams in eight states and the District of Columbia. Ten of the programs discussed in Hawk and Robards' study (1987) received some state funding in varying amounts.

Funding for planning, developing, and piloting induction programs has been made available by all states with STIPs. However, only two of the STIPs were reported to receive funds for implementation and continued operation at the levels projected from piloting data. As might be expected, states that mandate support teams as part of their assistance component report higher estimated cost per beginning teacher than those states with only a staff development component (Hawk and Robards, 1987).

One of the most highly funded STIPs is the California Mentor Teacher Program. Each school district can voluntarily participate in the program. The state funds $4,000 stipends for district-designated mentors and $2,000 reimbursement per mentor for implementation costs. These costs typically include salaries for substitute teachers, fees for training sessions, and administrative costs associated with required paperwork.

In lieu of a monetary stipend, some districts may compensate mentors through extended contracts, inservice credits, free meals during selected induction activities, release time, and reduced teaching loads. Hoffman, Edwards, O'Neal, Barnes, and Paulissen (1986) report that

in the two state-mandated beginning teacher programs they investigated, mentor support is up to district discretion. "Whether local districts will have the resources necessary to mount programs of support is in serious doubt unless these programs can be tied to well-articulated teacher education plans that bind professional development across a continuum" (Hoffman, et al., 1986, p. 21). Understandably, the more clearly financial decisionmakers see a program as a means of strengthening teacher competency, the more they will support it.

Hoffman and associates, 1986, suggests that state funding for state-mandated programs is more effective than local funding of such programs. Amounts to be allocated are dependent upon legislative appropriations. However, the importance of a sound mentoring program to solid starts for beginning teachers has been recognized by many local districts which devote much of their staff development budgets to mentor teacher stipends, release time, and/or training. If teacher attrition is a problem, investment in creating successful early experiences for beginning teachers can be more productive and less costly in dollars and staff morale than extensive recruiting.

Mentor Responsibilities, Selection, Training, and Assignment

Mentor Selection

A critical component of any formal mentoring program is careful selection of mentors. A mentor, in the truest sense of the word, cannot be assigned. A mentor relationship connotes a voluntary sharing, not limited to basic direction and encouragement (or coaching). However, if mentors volunteer for the role, if pairs are selected wisely, and if the beginning teachers are formally assigned mentor(s) before or early into the first school year, the possibility for more nurturing relationships is enhanced.

In her review of the literature, Galvez-Hjornevik (1986) suggests that the mentor-beginning teacher relationship should be voluntary and that age and gender be considered in establishing mentor-beginning teacher pairs. After the pair engages in work together for six months, "chemistry" then dictates the potential for continuing and deepening the relationship.

Acceptance of the mentoring program is closely tied to teacher perceptions of the selection process. If teachers believe the program components and criteria for selection are appropriate for attracting and selecting qualified teachers, they will lend their support to the program. One means of encouraging acceptance is to involve teachers in the selection process. An orderly, specific, and well-publicized application and selection procedure can be created, and strict criteria with some demonstrable connection to program goals and monitoring skills can be established as a basis for selection.

In California and New York City, selection committees choose mentor teachers. The majority of the members of these committees are teachers. In California, each district creates its own selection procedure and criteria (Barnett, Kirkpatrick, and Little, 1986; Wagner, 1985). In Kentucky, the resource teacher is appointed by the Department of Education from a pool of teachers state-trained for the position (Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship Program, 1988).

Huffman and Leak (1986) found that mentors could be effective in addressing needs of new teachers, but to maximize their effectiveness, mentors should teach the same content and work at the same grade level(s) as their beginning teachers. Varah, Theune, and Parker, (1986) agree. They believe a mentor needs at least three to five years of teaching experience and demonstrated competence as an effective teacher. The mentor should be a person with a thorough understanding of the school, of the curriculum, of learning theories, of growth and development, of principles of learning, and of evaluation procedures. In addition, Varah and associates state it is equally important that the mentor have the respect of fellow faculty and have the ability to initiate change in the curriculum and in the school.

Rauth and Bowers (1986) note that studies at the Institute for Research on Teaching and elsewhere have shown principals' judgment to be quite unreliable in identifying the "most effective" teachers. Fortunately, in most cases, mentor teachers voluntarily apply and submit to a screening procedure based on criteria that result in the selection of outstanding individuals.

Qualifications and Characteristics of Mentors

A recent review of the literature indicates that minimal requirements of mentor teachers

should include pedagogical and interpersonal skills. These include:

- willingness to assume the roles expected of a mentor (i.e., confidante, advocate, and critic);
- evaluation as a highly competent teacher and role model;
- appropriate certification (licensure);
- at least five years of full time teaching experience;
- willingness to stay current with the latest research on teaching and learning;
- ability to demonstrate effective teaching strategies and methods;
- ability to work as a team member and facilitate professional learning experiences of interns (Wagner, 1985).

Along with possessing pedagogical skills, a mentor must be able to communicate with the beginning teacher openly and supportively (Jensen, 1987). Good mentors tend to be people-oriented and are people who can tolerate ambiguity, prefer abstract to concrete concepts, value work, and respect and like their subordinates (Clawson, 1979). They also tend to be confident, secure, flexible, altruistic, warm, caring, sensitive to others, and they trust others (Alleman, Cochran, Doverspike, and Newman, 1986). Most researchers agree with Gray and Gray (1985) who state:

- Effective mentors are people-oriented and secure. They like and trust their proteges.
- Successful mentors take a personal interest in their proteges' careers, share power and expertise, encourage their proteges' ideas, and help them gain self-confidence.
- Successful mentors are skillful teachers, have a thorough command of the curriculum being taught, are confident, secure, flexible, warm, and caring.
- Most of the effective mentors are sensitive to the needs of their proteges, giving moral support, guidance, and feedback (Gray and Gray, 1985).

There is a virtual absence of tradition in standard organizational arrangements for mentor-teacher relationships. Selected for excellence in their own classrooms, mentors must be evaluated for their ability to make a favorable difference in other teachers' behaviors. Bird and Little (1985) note that mentoring programs represent a considerable departure from custom in many schools where teachers work in isolation from their peers, and that introducing prospective leaders into schools will surely make waves. The mentor's success depends on acceptance by staff members and the beginning teacher's willingness to accept the mentor as a colleague who shares mutual respect for him or her as a person and a professional. Otherwise, the mentor's efforts may be foiled by misunderstanding and resistance. Paradoxically, in their new roles, successful teachers can become failed mentors. Ultimately, the position of mentor teacher requires schools that organize systematic instructional improvement by means of close cooperation among teachers. Organizing such cooperative undertakings will be a substantial enterprise in its own right (Barnett, et al., 1986).

Training

One of the factors to consider in developing an effective mentoring program is mentor training. Training should precede the actual assignment and should be followed by continued inservice or staff development.

Gray and Gray (1985) say that mentor teachers and their proteges will be more successful if mentors are trained for their roles in accord with a five-level helping relationship model. Mentors trained to use this model usually improve their ability to provide important types of help: leadership, counseling, and indirect monitoring. Such assistance can enable a beginning teacher to reach the highest level,

where the formerly novice teacher becomes competent to handle autonomously the difficulties that beginning teachers encounter.

In the mentoring process, the mentor should use positive and healthy supervision strategies, know and help the beginning teacher develop conflict resolution strategies, and assist the beginning teacher in formative evaluation strategies.

As the beginning teacher develops professionally, the mentor should recognize the teacher's ability to contribute in a positive way to the interactions (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977). Working toward autonomy, beginning teachers can gradually exercise their own leadership skills and assume responsibility as they are guided through a mentoring program that encourages success.

Two statewide surveys were conducted by the Far West Laboratory for Research and Development. In a 1984 survey of the California mentoring program, fewer than one-third of the responding districts reported training or assisting mentors in their new roles (Barnett, et al., 1986). Since 1984, a growing number of districts, counties, and other service providers have begun to offer programs of training and support for mentors. However, the need is still great. In the more recent survey (Barnett, et al., 1986), almost two-thirds of the mentor coordinators identified remaining mentor training needs, ranging from assistance with curriculum development methods to instruction on classroom observation and feedback. Among the typical offerings now in place in mentor training in many California districts are:

- peer observation and coaching,
- group process skills/effective meetings,
- presentation and training skills,
- classroom management and organization,
- elements of effective instruction, and
- support groups for mentors (Barnett, et al., 1986).

Upon reflection, experienced mentors report that training which assisted them in relating effective mentoring skills to existing pedagogical skills was important in helping them organize their knowledge. Opportunities should be provided to examine recent research on teaching and learning, so that mentors' knowledge is less privately intuitive and more explicitly accessible to others. The training also should suggest strategies for working with others in groups and with individuals.

School systems vary widely in their ability to organize and fund programs of training and support for mentors. Program coordinators vary widely in their own backgrounds and in the time, inclinatior, and preparation they have to provide training and support to mentors. Therefore, a mentor handbook for trainees (e.g., Brzoska, Jones, Mahaffy, Miller, and Mychals, 1987; University of Kentucky, College of Education, 1987; Wildman, Niles, McLaughlin, and Magliaro, 1987) is an extremely useful tool.

Workshops on effective mentoring can potentially enhance staff growth and development, enabling older, effective teachers to utilize their years of professional experience as they assist beginning teachers.

Mentor/Teacher Assignment

There is reason to believe that the assignment of an appropriate support teacher or mentor may well be the most powerful and cost-effective intervention in an induction program (Galvez-Hjornevik, 1985; Galvez-Hjornevik and Smith, 1986; Odell, 1986). A review of the literature by Galvez-Hjornevik (1986) suggests a number of factors that can contribute to the success of the beginning teacher/mentor team. These factors include:

- selecting a highly competent, experienced teacher who is willing to serve as a support (mentor) teacher;
- pairing teachers who teach in the same discipline, with one or more common preparations;

- having the teachers' classrooms located in close proximity to one another;
- having a common planning time;
- pairing teachers with compatible professional ideologies; and
- pairing teachers with compatible personalities.

It is not always possible to employ all these criteria when pairing beginning teachers and mentor teachers. Whenever these factors can be considered in making an assignment, the success of the arrangement is likely to be facilitated (Huling-Austin, 1987).

Most mentors work alone, just as most teachers work independently, having no contact with other professionals involved in the mentoring process. However, this is not the only type of arrangement found in mentoring programs throughout the nation. Some districts develop teams or committes of educators, which may include the principal, the mentor, and a representative from higher education. Only the resource teacher in this team has the responsibility of assisting the beginning teacher. Kentucky has such an arrangement (Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship Program, 1988). In some programs the new teacher is assigned to at least two mentor teachers in order to broaden the beginning teacher's experience. Where such a mentoring team is used, the team may include the teacher mentor(s), a higher education faculty mentor, the principal, and the mentor/beginning teacher coordinator at the district level (optional). Hoffman and associates (1986) noted that beginning teacher programs which did not include strong team leadership rarely rose above the level of procedural compliance.

Administrators and teachers seeking to institute a formal mentor-beginning teacher program in their school districts will benefit from guidelines Phillips provides in "Establishing a Formalized Mentoring Program" (1983). Phillips found five distinct steps involved in the mentoring process:

- initiation (efforts to win acceptance),
- development (the mentor guides the beginning teacher until the mentor feels that the beginning teacher can take on more and more responsibility),
- disillusionment (realization that usefulness of relationship is ending),
- parting (developing independence in the beginning teacher), and
- transformation (becoming a friend and an equal).

Kram (1983) also found distinct stages that occurred in the mentoring process. He describes the process in the following four steps:

- initiation (development of realistic expectations),
- cultivation (mentor meets career and psychosocial needs of beginning teacher),
- separation (beginning teacher becomes competent and independent), and
- redefinition (of relationship between mentor and beginning teacher).

None of the steps were described as successful without necessary support from school administrators as well as district supervisors.

Release Time

Allowing sufficient release time for the mentor and beginning teacher to observe one anothers' teaching is often overlooked in designing mentoring programs.

An example of adequate provision occurs in California, where the law permits mentors to be released from teaching responsibilities for as much as 40 percent of their time (Wagner, 1986). However, mentors represented in the California surveys reported spending an average of 23

hours a month mentoring. This figure represents an average: the range is substantial, from 10 to 45 hours per month. Only about one third of this mentoring time was spent interacting with other teachers, while nearly half of it was spent on curricular matters. Mentorship in the California program includes a variety of roles, such as curriculum development, and only a third or fewer mentors are charged with assisting beginning teachers.

Kentucky's Beginning Teacher Internship Program requires the mentor, who is called a resource teacher and is appointed by the Department of Education from a pool of teachers trained for the position, to spend a minimum of 70 hours during the school year working with the intern. Twenty hours are to be used observing the intern's teaching, and 50 are for assistance outside class time. The resource teacher's time is logged for accountability. During the internship period she/he serves as a model and mentor to the intern (Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship Program, 1988).

In Toledo, Ohio, consulting (mentor) teachers are released full time up to three years to assist beginning teachers and experienced teachers on remediation before returning to the classroom. Providing substantial or full release time for mentors is a justifiable investment in both economic and educational terms. Rotating mentor terms, a characteristic of the Toledo Intern-Intervention Program, helps preserve teacher collegiality by preventing mentors from becoming "mini-administrators." This rotation system also offers the school district the opportunity to use the new skills of former mentors in assisting all teachers' growth through teacher centers or other staff development programs (Rauth and Bowers, 1986).

In the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools approach to staff development, mentors are released from teaching duties one-half day each month to work with new teachers (Hanes and Mitchell, 1985).

Roles and Responsibilities of Mentors

Mentors must play several roles, including guide, role model, sponsor, counselor, resource, and colleague. Schein (1978) identifies eight possible mentor roles: teacher, confidante, role model, developer of talents, sponsor, door-opener, protector, and successful leader. Gray and Gray (1985) define the role of the mentor as provider of situational leadership, role model, instructor/promoter of thinking skills; demonstrator/teacher, motivator/promoter of realistic values, supervisor; counselor; and promoter of indirect monitoring.

A job description for the teacher mentors should incorporate at least the following responsibilities:

- Supervise the beginning teacher's instructional activities, observe and provide performance feedback.
- Demonstrate effective instruction to the beginning teacher.
- Meet regularly with the beginning teacher to provide assistance in the following areas: curriculum and instructional planning, diagnosing learner needs and differences, evaluating student progress, classroom management, selecting teaching strategies and instructional materials, and school acculturation.
- Meet regularly with higher education faculty mentors, mentoring program supervisors, and/or the principal to identify needs, plan assistance strategies, and discuss teacher and program progress.
- Participate in orientation and training for mentors.
- Provide pedagogical beginning teachers as needed in cooperation with other resource persons.
- Provide periodic and frequent formative

evaluation of each beginning teacher's progress.

- Participate as a member of any mentoring team.

Administrative Support

As programs of support for beginning teachers are initiated throughout the states, their success and survival depends on administrative support at local school, district, and state levels. If the message is clearly and consistently heard that teachers are highly respected professionals in our society and that the complex process of becoming a "master" teacher develops gradually, the foundation will have been laid for successful induction programs.

One way administrators can demonstrate their support is by being flexible regarding the time it takes for beginning teachers and their mentors to develop and maintain their relationship. Some policy changes may include allowing mentors and beginning teachers release time or professional leave for mentoring functions. Jensen (1987) warns that induction training programs should offer compensatory or release time for participants in order to avoid adding time stresses on the mentors' and beginning teachers' already burdened schedules.

In her study of beginning teachers, Elizabeth Clewett (Jensen, 1987) found that new teachers are assigned larger groups of students, more difficult students, and more staff duties than their more experienced peers. Huling-Austin (1987) contends that more experienced teachers should be assigned the more challenging classes and schedules and that beginning teachers should be given assignments that offer them the best opportunity to succeed.

Brzoska, et al. (1987), find that ongoing administrative support is one of the key variables in the success of these programs. An important part of this support is communicating to staff and the community the fact that school administrators regard the mentoring program as a valuable means of assuring high levels of competence in teaching. Financially, administrators can show their support by providing printing supplies, reference materials, and other opportunities to link mentors and beginning teachers to current research and alternative strategies for easing the transition from student teaching to independent professional teaching.

Bird and Little (1985) state that the most effective administrative support can be described as opportunistic management in the best sense of the word. "Models for the promotion of leadership by teachers may be less useful to district officials than propositions and tactics to be employed steadily, catch as catch can" (Bird and Little, 1985, p. 15).

Bird (1986) describes some effective propositions and tactics for school principals:

- Distinguish the shared and separate duties of principals and mentor teachers. This reduces misunderstanding as the principal introduces a new leadership position within the school.
- Establish the intention of support rather than remediation. Allow teachers and mentors to collaborate on developing purposes, ground rules, and procedures in joint training sessions.
- Rearrange schedule, budget, and routines to make cooperation and leadership more feasible.
- Explain and advocate these changes to students, staff, and parents.
- Solicit support from district administrators, teacher union officials, and influential teachers in the school.
- Work directly on school norms, promoting norms of rigorous exchange, by modeling such behavior with influential teachers and by acknowledging and rewarding staff participation in adopting the new norms.

Through such initiatives, participants gain assurance that they are acting on basic, stable policy; and in turn, the prospect of success for the mentoring program is significantly enhanced.

Tips for Success from Tennessee Teachers

Study group members conducted informal surveys, using similar questions, in three different Tennessee communities. One member surveyed beginning teachers and mentor teachers in a large urban school district, one member surveyed equal numbers of beginning and mentor teachers in a small rural system, and another surveyed through discussions with beginning and experienced teachers in college classes she instructs. Both the discussions and the surveys were conducted to gather opinions of the information first-year teachers need most.

In the two surveys, mentor and beginning teachers were asked to list: areas in which new teachers received help from mentors, the greatest benefits of mentoring, and ways to improve the mentor/beginning teacher relationship.

Responses

The respondents in the large urban system gave the following responses when asked to name areas in which mentors had provided the most help:

- The mentor explained the correct way to fill out forms (i.e., lesson plans, unit plans, system procedures, grade books, daily schedules, cumulative records, opening/closing procedures, behavior documentation).
- The mentor shared materials, such as supplies to make bulletin boards, copies of worksheets, and other materials for lessons.
- The mentor made suggestions on how to communicate with parents.
- The mentor discussed how to handle discipline and shared classroom management techniques (for instance, sharing Assertive Discipline tapes).
- The mentor gave "strokes" and made many small suggestions, such as how to take a class to the cafeteria quietly.
- The mentor shared communication strategies, such as holding a beginning-of-the-year meeting, an open house, parent conferences, and sending out newsletters.
- The mentor helped with setting up a classroom for the first time.
- The mentor explained how to handle grading papers and assigning grades for the grade book.

In the same system beginning teachers made the following suggestions to improve mentor-beginning teacher relationships:

- There is a need for tips on how to avoid getting "stressed out."
- Mentors should be assigned before school begins. This would give the pair time to meet during inservice education sessions.
- Semi-regular meetings between mentor and beginning teacher should be established.
- Mentors should provide more information on student retention.
- Mentors should help with potential problems at parent-teacher conferences.
- Mentors need to give more suggestions for activities.

When asked for suggestions to ensure the success of a mentoring program, these teachers responded:

- The mentor and beginning teacher should teach the same grade level/subject area.
- Beginning teachers should be allowed to observe the mentors.
- Mentors should have positive attitudes and be patient.
- New teacners should always ask for help when it is needed.
- Mentors should be consistent.

Obstacles to avoid described by these beginning teachers included:

- poor mentor/new teacher communication, and
- beiı_ too busy to mentor.

In the small, rural school system the results of the questionnaire showed that mentors had provided the most help in the areas of:

- discipline,
- school protocol,
- lesson plans,
- materials shared by the mentor, and
- record keeping.

In the same system, teachers reported that the greatest benefits derived from mentoring were:

- having someone to talk to and someone to listen,
- moral support for the new teacher, and
- students' benefiting from the enthusiasm of the new teacher and the experience of the "seasoned teacher" (a benefit cited by both mentors and new teachers).

The rural community teachers felt that the following improvements needed to be made in the program:

- more time for mentoring,
- careful selection of mentors,
- training for mentors, and
- clear descriptions of expectations for the beginning teacher and mentor.

The discussions held on the college campus indicated that:

- Most of the new teachers wished they had a manual with all school policies, information about professional leave days, sick days, etc. They wanted copies of all necessary forms printed in the manual, including the forms required for field trips (forms to go to parents, to the school district, etc.).
- Teachers need help with understanding and making additions to student cumulative records. Rules on cumulative records vary from one district to another.
- Teachers need guidelines on how to prepare report cards.
- Teachers want copies of school board policies on such things as how to refer students for testing, how to assist handicapped or special education students, what to do in placement or assistance meetings, how to manage students leaving for special classes, how to administer medicine, and how to handle student discipline.
- Teachers need appropriate information on the Tennessee Instructional Model program, and the Basic Skills First program. They would appreciate an explanation of the processes.
- Teachers need to receive state curriculum guides.
- Teachers need copies of insurance forms as well as completion instructions.
- Teachers need to know how to conduct parent-teacher conferences and how to develop files to document student behavior. Tips on informing parents of student and class successes would be beneficial.
- Teachers want to receive instruction in administering student achievement tests before testing dates.

- Teachers need to understand the local system for evaluating teachers.

Summary

It is apparent that the responses of these Tennessee teachers to the open-ended questions echo recommendations previously cited from the literature. In a North Carolina survey (Huffman and Leak, 1986) teachers reported that the most beneficial aspects of having a mentor were encouragement, collegiality, and specific suggestions for the improvement of teaching. "Someone to talk to" was deemed very important. The North Carolina teachers viewed the mentor as a friendly critic.

The most frustrating pitfalls of mentoring are listed in the Mentor Teacher Handbook (Brzoska, et al., 1987). Successful mentors avoid:

- overextending themselves—saying yes to so much the teacher has no personal time;
- proceeding without clarification of the mentor's role (mentors need administrative guidelines outlining administrators' commitment to the program, budget allocations, and processes necessary for success);
- proceeding without clarifying the mentor role and expectations for the beginning teacher (mentors should not be perceived as part of the evaluation process); and
- failing to understand professional growth (mentors need to be trained in such areas as working with adult learners, problem solving, and giving constructive criticism).

Benefits for mentors come from sharing and growing professionally. Teachers helping teachers is an important new direction of the profession. Mentoring programs should be designed which improve both the educational practices and the status of teachers.

Specific Recommendations

In summary, five priorities for mentoring program success emerged from the group survey findings that were reiterated and supported by the review of the literature. Because these priorities are relevant to both national concerns and concerns of Tennessee teachers, it is recommended that mentoring programs:

- Allow enough time for mentor/beginning teacher relationships to develop.
- Select mentors carefully and take care in making mentor/beginning teacher assignments. Try to ensure that the pair teach the same grade level/subject, have compatible personalities, and are willing to take on the roles.
- Train mentors, especially in (a) problem solving, (b) constructive criticism, and (c) working with adult learners.
- Provide special inservice training for new teachers—addressing instructional techniques, classroom management, and school and system policy.
- Clearly define, for both parties, the roles of mentor and new teacher.

Background of Study Group

The Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) seeks to provide professional development opportunities to educators by working with and through their associations. Since 1985, the Classroom Instruction (CI) Program has assisted associations through the creation of study groups. AEL's purpose for a study group is to assist educators in conducting and/or using research.

A study group is composed of educators who organize to conduct a study on an educational issue. The study group produces a product that is useful to other educators. Associations and AEL jointly select topics for study groups, although the selection of members is handled by the association. AEL staff participate in meetings as members of the study group and usually take a facilitative role. AEL provides a small grant to the association to assist with the group's costs, but the association or individual members generally make in-kind contributions that far exceed AEL's grant. AEL provides additional services, such as editing, layout, and typesetting of the group's final product. The responsibility for dissemination lies with both AEL and the association. Usually, AEL provides dissemination to the other three states in its Region while the association disseminates the study in its own state.

Planning the Study

A February 1988 meeting between Katie Stanton Harris, President of TEA; Gloria Dailey, Instruction and Professional Development (IPD) Coordinator of TEA; and Jane Hange, Director of the AEL Classroom Instruction Program (CI) resulted in the formation of the TEA-AEL study group on assistance to beginning teachers. The association staff nominated members of TEA's Instruction and Professional Development Internship and Teacher Education subcommittee for study group participation. Members of the group were already deeply involved in the issue of beginning teacher induction and had particular interest in teacher mentoring programs.

At its initial meeting in April 1988, the group decided to focus on the issue of teacher mentoring programs as a key component of assistance to beginning teachers. While they decided to conduct informal surveys of teachers in their own districts about new teachers' needs for assistance and support, their primary product, they decided, would be "how to" guides for new teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators in school systems instituting mentoring programs. Recommendations of an advisory committee to the State Board of Education on which one study group member sat influenced the direction of the study group. State Board of Education action was anticipated which would establish an induction program for new teachers in Tennessee. An induction program may be defined as an organized orientation procedure that provides continuity between preservice experience and full responsibility for classroom teaching. The program proposed by the State Board would include provisions for mentoring all categories of new teachers. Study group members concluded that "how to" guides would soon be needed in many Tennessee school systems. While the induction program has not been formally adopted or funded at the state level, recommendations in this guide should be useful in the organization of local system mentoring programs.

This guide is one of a series of three produced by the study group. In addition to this guide, intended for use by administrators and program planners, the series also includes: *Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Beginning Teacher's Handbook* and *Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Mentor Teacher Resource Book.*

Conducting the Study

The study group grounded their products in a review of the literature on teacher mentoring, taking advantage of experience gained in other parts of the country to inform Tennessee school system personnel of the most useful program features. In addition, they decided to informally poll mentor and beginning teachers in their own school systems to identify: (1) the areas in which beginning teachers need help, (2) the role of the mentor teacher, (3) benefits of the mentor/beginning teacher relationship, and (4) needed improvement to the mentor/beginning teacher relationship. While their surveys were informal, three study group members who polled their colleagues reported very similar findings, which verify the utility of the group's products for Tennessee teachers. In addition to these activities, the group requested the president of the Tennessee Education Association (TEA) to mail a letter to all local association presidents requesting copies of any mentoring information they disseminated to members. One response was received, from the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association (MNEA), thus illustrating the need for the three guides. Results of the three informal surveys are discussed in greater detail in "Tips for Success from Tennessee Teachers" in this document.

The study group reviewed over 95 resources on mentoring, in part from the Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee state departments of education and from AEL resources, which included a nationwide literature search. Members discussed these materials as a whole group, then planned the various publications, chose topics on which to write, and took copies of the literature that pertained to their individual topics to study more carefully and incorporate into their writing. Each study group member took responsibility for developing one or more sections of the three products. The three publications were edited by all group members and the TEA president and instruction and professional (IPD) coordinator before receiving a final edit from AEL's staff writers. AEL staff were responsible for layout and typesetting of the documents. TEA received camera-ready copy of the document and disseminates the publication to Tennessee educators. AEL publicizes the mentoring products and makes each available at cost to educators in Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia.

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Appalachia Educational Laboratory
Study Group Product Assessment Form

A. Background

1. Name of Product: Bridges to Strength: Establishing a Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers, an Administrator's Guide
2. Name: _____
3. School/District: _____
4. Type of Job You Hold: _____
5. State: _____

B. Rating

This instrument asks you to evaluate this particular product on a series of product quality scales. Please mark your responses with an"X" (corresponding to your answer) at any point along the scale provided. If you cannot reply to any scale, please check the "Cannot Reply" option for that item.

1. How easy was it for your to get this material?
___Cannot Reply

Difficult — Very Easy

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

2. How clearly presented was the information in this material?
___Cannot Reply

Unclear — Very Clear

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

3. How credible was the information in this material?
___Cannot Reply

Unbelievable — Very Believable

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

4. How useful was the information in this material?
___Cannot Reply

Not Useful — Very Useful

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