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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of a beginning teacher induction program on involved mentors' teaching competence. Additionally, it investigated the relationship of mentor's self-efficacy to program impact. Approximately 1,600 beginning teachers and 700 mentors from 56 school districts participated in a state-funded induction program in which experienced teacher mentors received training to assess and support new teachers during their first year of teaching. Mentors' self-efficacy toward mentoring and perceptions of change within their own practice were measured. Results indicated that all mentors reported positive change with regard to self-perceptions of change within their own practice. Mentors perceived that the most change occurred in the areas of classroom management and discipline and professionalism. They also perceived that they had made gains in their ability to organize routines, establish discipline, organize the physical environment, promote social development and group responsibility, and establish a climate of fairness and respect. There was a significant but small positive correlation between mentor self-efficacy and self-reported impact on teaching practice. (Contains 13 references.) (SM)

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Professional Development of Mentors Within a Beginning Teacher Induction Program: How does the Garden (Mentors) Grow?

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The objective of this study was to examine an induction program's impact on involved mentors' teaching competence. Additionally, mentor self-efficacy's relationship to program impact was investigated. Approximately 1600 beginning teachers and 750 mentors from 56 school districts were part of a state-funded induction program in which experienced teachers (mentors) were trained to assess and support new teachers during their first year of teaching. Mentors' self-efficacy toward mentoring and their self-perceptions of change within their own practice were measured. With regard to mentors' self-perceptions of positive change within their teaching practice, all mentors reported positive change. Mentors perceived that the areas of classroom management and discipline and professionalism behaviors had been most impacted. There was a significant, but small positive correlation between mentor self-efficacy and mentors' self-reported impact on teaching practice.

Purposeful professional development for mentors serving within an induction program can result in mentors' self-perceived gains in teaching competence. Induction may not only be beneficial to new teachers but also to the mentor teachers supporting the novices.

Introduction

In an effort to retain teachers and improve the quality teachers entering the teaching field, induction programs have proliferated in the past years (Glickman, 1990). The "sink or swim" philosophy is no longer tenable with mounting teacher shortages and dismal retention rates within the first five years of teaching (Devaney, 1987; Darling-Hammond, 1984; Schlecty & Vance, 1981). Induction program structures vary, but most include use of mentor teachers or support providers, opportunities for professional development for the beginning teacher, and protective classroom assignments for incoming teachers. Few programs, however, have targeted mentor professional development as a major goal of beginning teacher induction.

In this study, mentor professional development was a planned, meaningful goal of equal importance to the mission of preparing professional development of new teachers. Objectives of the study were to:

- identify mentor teachers' perception of growth in their own ability to implement effective classroom instruction as a result of their involvement as an induction mentor, and
- investigate possible relationships between mentor self-efficacy and self-perceived gains as a teacher.

It was hypothesized that mentor teachers would report that induction had a positive impact on their teaching practice. Additionally, we expected that mentor self-efficacy would have a significantly positive relationship to the self-perceived impact on practice. The answer to these questions has major implications for those in charge of induction programs. Perhaps targeting mentor

professional development as well as beginning teacher professional development facilitates a more powerful long-term model of teacher education and makes better use of funding investments—especially when resources are limited.

Literature Review

Thies-Sprinthall (1986) argued that induction programs have often been flawed in that mentor teachers have usually been trained for their role of working with beginning teachers in a two to three day "inservice" workshop which provided low level simplistic intervention strategies. Often, the mentors were trained to evaluate teacher effectiveness by using a "checklist" type rating scale which was narrowly focused, rigidly standardized—limited in that it does not promote overall professional development.

Kay (1990) suggested that "mentoring should be a comprehensive effort directed toward helping a protégé develop the attitudes and behaviors (skills) of self-reliance and accountability within a defined environment." To help beginning teachers become more self-reliant, mentors need also to be self-reliant, knowledgeable, well-versed in reflective coaching skills, and prepared to provide beginning teachers with feedback about their professional competence which the beginning teacher can use to improve their teaching.

It is probably true that in such states as California where the teacher credentialing process now requires a mandatory two-year induction program for all beginning teachers (Olebe, Jackson, and Danielson, 1999), little time or resources have been devoted to considering the state of "mentoring"

itself, at least in terms of the benefits for mentors as a whole. Although most studies of induction and support programs agree that the mentor is central to the success of the program, little discussion follows on the specific nature of the contribution of the mentor (Feiman-Nemser, Parker, and Zeichner, 1993) and the impact it has on the beginning teachers as well as the mentor in long-term professional development.

With regard to beginning teachers, educators have begun to question whether mentors can support these beginning teachers in a manner that produces high quality new teachers. Emotional support for new teachers may make them feel better but does not necessarily improve their teaching practice (Little, 1990). Little (1990) concluded if "mentoring is more than passing on a bag of tricks, then mentors need to learn how to describe and demonstrate underlying principles of teaching and clearly and in a straight forward way without fear of offending the new teacher." To enable mentor teachers to develop this kind of skill, more high-level training needs to occur for the mentor. Stanulis (1994) believes that experienced teachers, given an appropriate training/experience do not just simply master teaching skills, but continue to grow and develop skills in reflection and improvement of teaching practice. Gratch (1998) further argues that if it is important for teachers to be reflective and interested in improving teaching practice through formative assessment benchmarks, than teacher education programs need to provide opportunities for veteran teachers to talk about their ongoing development to preservice and beginning teachers. In this way, new and experienced teachers communicate about the importance of self-reflection and self-assessment as tools for continued professional growth.

Given this literature, it does seem, therefore; that mentor professional development can be a by-product of new teacher induction. But is it possible to artfully plan for mentor professional development and beginning teacher development as a joint complementary outcome? Can induction programs planned in a partnership collaborative to be designed so that mentors believe that they can be supportive of their mentees, help them improve their teaching practice, and also feel more empowered in their own professional lives?

Methods and Data Sources

Mentor teachers serving within a state-funded teacher induction program during 2000-2001 were the focus of study. Fifty-six school districts and two county offices of education were partners in this, the fifth year of the consortium. Approximately, 1600 beginning teachers and seven hundred mentors participated in the program.

Mentors completed a five-day summer training and five follow up trainings to prepare and support them to implement a formative assessment system with new teachers. Specific objectives of the training included the following:

- Develop mentor skills in formative assessment strategies including classroom observation, lesson plan analysis, guided reflection, and goal setting.
- Prepare mentors to interact with beginning teachers through peer and cognitive coaching methods.

- Develop mentor knowledge and understanding of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP), the foundation of the induction program.
- Provide continual support and encouragement for mentors throughout the year of induction.

The California Formative Assessment System for Teachers (CFASST), designed by Educational Testing Services in 1998, was the assessment system utilized within the program.

Mentors documented all work with their mentees over the course of the year. Written work included documentation of the following:

- the context of the new teacher's class, school, district, and community,
- standard-based connections noted during classroom observations,
- summaries and suggestions based upon gather evidence,
- reflections of the new teacher
- standards-based assessments completed by the mentee with guidance of the mentor, and
- goals and action plans for completion by the beginning teacher.

The Mentor Efficacy Scale (MES; Riggs, 1997) was administered to mentors during a training session. These scales assess mentor beliefs about their own ability to effectively support beginning teachers. The MES consists of two subscales that measure both the outcome expectancy and the self-efficacy of mentors with regard to mentoring. Both scales demonstrate

an adequate reliability: Self-efficacy subscale alpha=0.87 while the Outcome Expectancy Scale alpha=0.77.

The MES asks mentors to respond to Likert Scale items which prompt them to reflect upon their mentoring abilities in four skill areas: personal (emotional support), instructional (promotion of instructional growth), professional (promotion of teacher understanding of policy and procedure), and assessment (use of assessment to identify novice abilities).

Mentors completed an additional survey to collect information on self-perceived beliefs regarding gains they themselves made in implementation of effective teaching practices as described within the six standards of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP). The CSTP include the following six standards and their elements:

1. Engaging and Supporting all Students in Learning

- Connecting students' prior knowledge, life experience, and interests with learning goals
- Using a variety of instructional strategies and resources to respond to students' diverse needs
- Facilitating learning experiences that promote autonomy, interaction, and choice
- Engaging students in problem solving, critical thinking, and other activities that make subject matter meaningful
- Promoting self-directed reflective learning for all students

2. Creating & Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning

- Creating a physical environment that engages all students
- Establishing a climate that promotes fairness and respect
- Promoting social development and group responsibility
- Establishing and maintaining standards for student behavior
- Planning and implementing classroom procedures and routines that support student learning
- Using instructional time effectively

3. Understanding & Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning

- Demonstrating knowledge of subject matter content and student development
- Organizing curriculum to support student understanding of subject matter
- Interrelating ideas and information within and across subject matter areas
- Developing student understanding through instructional strategies that are appropriate to the subject matter
- Using materials, resources, and technologies to make subject matter accessible to students

4. Planning Instruction & Designing Learning Experiences for all Students

- Drawing on a valuing students' backgrounds, interests, and developmental learning needs
- Establishing and articulating goals for student learning

- Developing and sequencing instructional activities and materials for student learning
- Designing short-term and long-term plans to foster student learning
- Modifying instructional plans to adjust for student needs

5. Assessing Student Learning

- Establishing and communicating learning goals for all students
- Collecting and using multiple sources of information to assess student learning
- Involving and guiding all students in assessing their own learning
- Using the results of assessments to guide instruction
- Communicating with students, families, and other audiences about student progress

6. Developing as a Professional Educator

- Reflecting on teaching practice and planning professional development
- Establishing professional goals and pursuing opportunities to grow professionally
- Working with communities to improve professional practice
- Working with families to improve professional practice
- Working with colleagues to improve professional practice

Results

Three hundred forty-eight mentors completed both surveys. Descriptive statistics are reported in Table One. Scores on the mentor self-efficacy and outcome expectancy scales are within the normative levels of previous samples. All variables approximated normal distributions. No extreme outliers were present.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Dev.
Mentoring S.E.	357	83.06	55.00	95.00	6.80
Mentoring O.E.	347	53.10	35.00	70.00	5.79
Standard #1	348	19.79	5.00	25.00	4.23
Standard #2	345	20.15	5.00	25.00	5.14
Standard #3	348	19.30	5.00	25.00	4.77
Standard #4	344	19.64	5.00	25.00	4.55
Standard #5	338	18.80	5.00	25.00	4.38
Standard #6	346	20.23	6.00	25.00	3.68

Correlations are reported in Table Two. Correlations of interest, those between self-efficacy, outcome expectancy and impact on the six standards are in the first two columns. Almost all are significant but of small magnitude. The correlation between self-efficacy and

outcome expectancy are of moderate magnitude (consistent with previous results). Perceived impact across all standards was highly correlated.

Table 2: Correlations

	Ment. S.E.	Ment. O.E.	Std. #1	Std. #2	Std. #3	Std. #4	Std. #5	Std. #6
Mentoring S.E.	1.00							
Mentoring O.E.	.30**	1.00						
Standard #1	.14**	.12*	1.00					
Standard #2	.14**	.14**	.74**	1.00				
Standard #3	.14**	.16**	.78**	.82**	1.00			
Standard #4	.17**	.12*	.79**	.81**	.86**	1.00		
Standard #5	.13**	.10*	.74**	.75**	.77**	.85**	1.00	
Standard #6	.10*	.09	.54**	.56**	.55**	.59**	.62	1.00

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Figure One shows the relative perceived impact on all six teaching standards. Error bars utilizing 95% confidence intervals around estimated means indicate where statistically significant differences exist. Standard Two and Standard Six were more likely to be identified as positively impacted than Standard Five. Figure Two breaks this down by item level. Almost all item overlap with the exception of:

- Reflecting on teaching practice and planning professional development,
- Establishing professional goals and pursuing opportunities to grow professionally, and
- Working with colleagues to improve professional practice.

These items were obviously more likely to be perceived as positively impacted, while the standard on "involving and guiding all students in assessing their own learning" was least likely to be identified as positively impacted.

Figure 1:

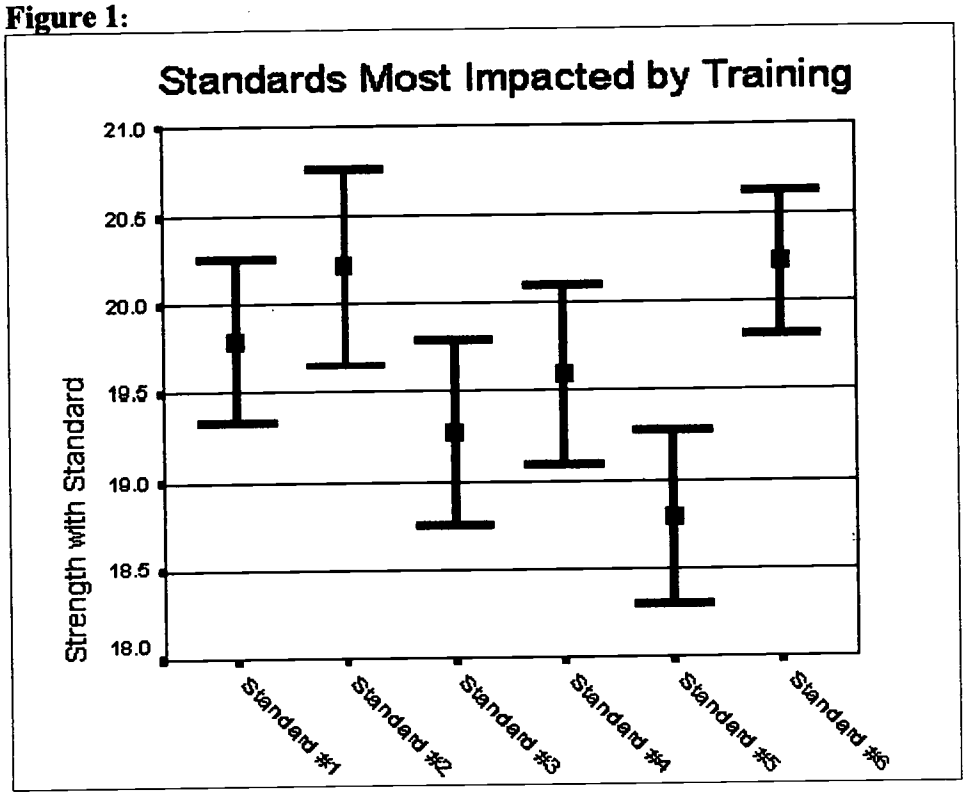
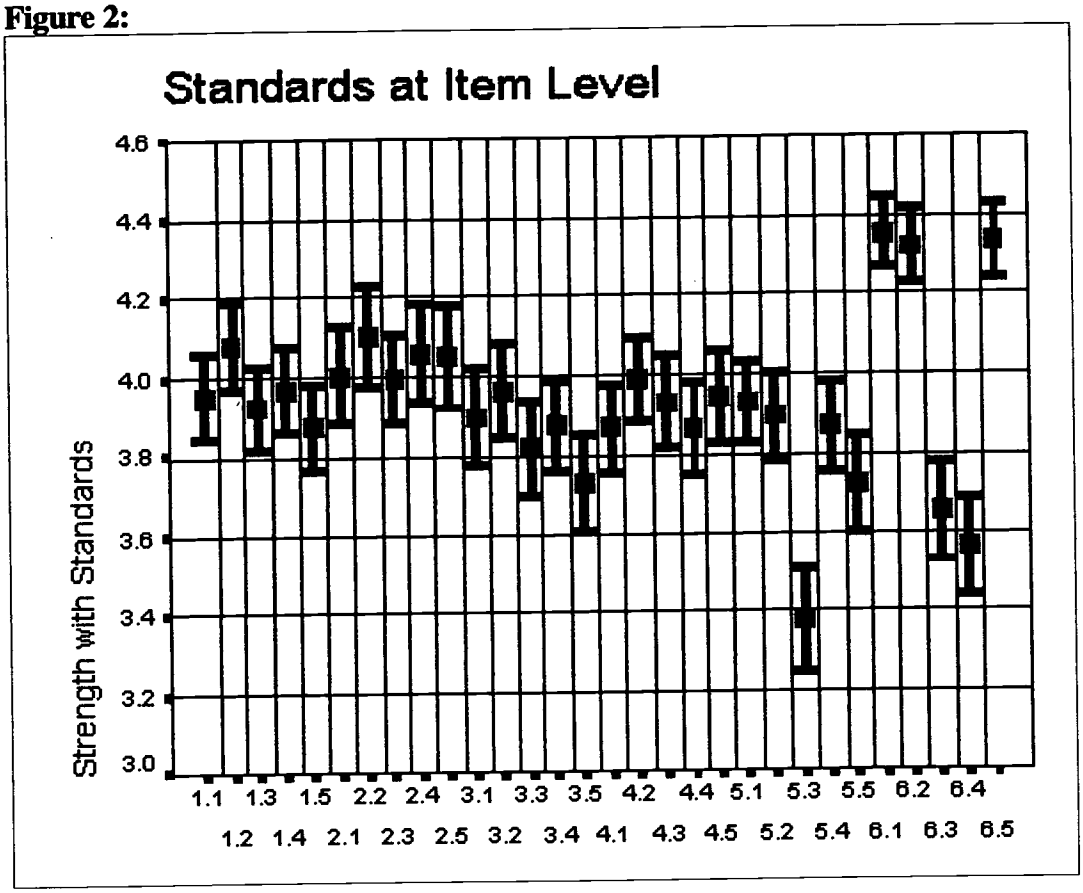

Standards Most Impacted by Training
Strength with Standard
21.0
20.5
20.0
19.5
19.0
18.5
18.0
Standard #1
Standard #2
Standard #3
Standard #4
Standard #5
Standard #6

Figure 2:


Standards at Item Level
Strength with Standards
4.6
4.4
4.2
4.0
3.8
3.6
3.4
3.2
3.0
1.1 1.3 1.5 2.2 2.4 3.1 3.3 3.5 4.2 4.4 5.1 5.3 5.5 6.2 6.4
1.2 1.4 2.1 2.3 2.5 3.2 3.4 4.1 4.3 4.5 5.2 5.4 6.1 6.3 6.5

Discussion/Implications

The small magnitude of effect size between self-efficacy and outcome expectancy beliefs and identification of impact on teaching abilities was somewhat unexpected. One would predict that mentors with greater belief in their ability to mentor would most likely be more effective mentors, and thus, perhaps reap more benefit from the induction program. Future research in this area might assess self-efficacy and outcome expectancy at the start of the induction program rather than at the end, as done within this study. Initial self-efficacy beliefs might be more predictive of impact since those beliefs include more low self-efficacy beliefs than at conclusion of the project.

This study's findings suggest that induction may have positive impact on mentors' own ability to implement desired instructional practice. One might assume that mentors have been selected to serve as mentors due at least in some part to their teaching expertise. Yet, these mentors reported induction's positive impact on their ability in all teaching areas. The standard on classroom management and discipline, in fact, was most likely to be identified as impacted. This might be viewed as somewhat surprising since classroom management and discipline are typically viewed as an area that mentor teachers have most likely mastered. This study's mentors, however, felt that they'd made gains within their own ability to organize routines, establish discipline, organize the physical environment, promote social development and group responsibility, and establish a climate of fairness and respect. Their observation of novice teachers and reflective dialogues prompted their own growth in the very areas they addressed with the new teachers.

It was less surprising to these researchers to find that mentors were quite likely to identify *Professional Educator* elements as impacted. The nature of this induction program provided ample opportunity to work with colleagues, to reflect upon teaching practice, and to promote new teachers' establishment of professional goals. Perhaps these opportunities actually promote mentors' growth in the other standard areas.

Interestingly, the very nature of a well-designed induction program may be what researchers have long advocated as effective professional development for all teachers. Within induction, new and mentor teachers have time to visit each others' classrooms, to collect evidence about practice, to engage in reflective dialogues, and to set professional goals and action plans. Interactions take place over time, not in one-shot workshop settings. All involved teachers reap benefit.

Future research efforts might examine mentors' actual performance as mentors in relationship to the mentor preparation they received. Additionally, performance measures should be utilized to investigate the relationship of self-efficacy to effectiveness as a mentor.

Future efforts might also examine the impact of mentor preparation programs on the actual teaching abilities of the trained mentors. While this program found some patterns in the beliefs of the mentors in regard to the impact on their implementation of the CSTP, there was no investigation of change within their actual classroom practice.

While this investigation is limited in that it did not utilize a control group of alternatively prepared mentors, we assume that mentors serving new teachers make greater professional growth gains if they themselves are trained and supported throughout the induction program. Quality induction does not result from simply assigning mentors to new teachers. Mentors must be able to practice through the use of continuous self-assessments and reflective conversations. These skills are not necessarily within the repertoire of expert teachers or new teachers, but must be developed and nurtured over time. Future research efforts should focus on identifying the most necessary components of mentor training and support.

Clearly, educational reform is targeting the improvement of teacher practices in all teachers regardless of years of experience. As states ponder the importance of intense, purposefully planned support for beginning teachers, so too should they acknowledge that the involved mentor teachers can and should benefit from intense, process-oriented professional development as well. Beginning teacher induction can provide the structure and commitment to serve both the mentor and the beginning teacher.

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