ABSTRACT

            This study investigated what new Korean elementary teachers
wanted to learn and what experienced teachers, regarded as potential mentors,
expected to teach to beginning teachers. The study was conducted to help
determine the contents of a mentoring program being developed for new
elementary teachers by using needs assessment. Separate questionnaires were
administered to new teachers and potential mentors at 30 elementary schools in
1998. Each questionnaire contained 35 items measuring classroom-focused and
outside-the-classroom issues. Results revealed that both new teachers and
potential mentors reported higher mentoring needs for classroom-focused issues
than for outside-the-classroom issues. Of classroom-focused issues, while new
teachers tended to weigh the contents related to teaching activities,
potential mentors were likely to be more focused on classroom managerial
activities as mentoring contents. Of outside-the-classroom issues, new
teachers wanted to seek information regarding their school contexts and tasks
from their mentors. Potential mentors believed that developing and maintaining
successful human relationships with colleagues was the most important content
that new teachers needed to learn from mentors. The needs of potential mentors
were significantly higher than the needs of new teachers. (Contains 21
references.) (SM)

TOWARD AN EFFECTIVE MENTORING PROGRAM PLANNING BY USING

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: FOR NEW ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN SEOUL, KOREA

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TOWARD AN EFFECTIVE MENTORING PROGRAM PLANNING BY USING NEEDS ASSESSMENT: FOR NEW ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN SEOUL, KOREA

Abstract

In order to determine the contents of a mentoring program being developed in Seoul by using needs assessment for new elementary teachers, this study was undertaken to identify what new elementary teachers want to learn and what experienced teachers, who were regarded as potential mentors, expect to teach to beginning teachers. The investigators developed a separate questionnaire for new teachers and potential mentors. Each questionnaire contained 35 items measuring mainly two dimensions: classroom-focused issues and outside classroom issues. Consequently, the study reveals that both the new teachers and the potential mentors have higher mentoring needs for classroom-focused issues than outside classroom issues. In both issues, the needs of potential mentors were significantly higher than those of the new teachers. Considering the top five priority needs identified for each group in both issues by mean response value, in general, the different needs in different priority order are revealed. Finally, this study addresses two implications for further study.

Introduction

One of the most critical reasons for repeated calls to educational reform across the world is to improve student achievement. There seems general agreement that a variety of education reform initiatives would be unable to succeed without improving the quality of teaching in the classroom. Consequently, a number of policy initiatives designed to influence the quality of teaching have recently been implemented (Heck & Wolcott, 1997).

In this similar vain, since 1996, Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education has been striving to enhance the quality of teaching to reflect individual student's differences in ability and aptitude. The office is actively waging campaigns for 'Sae-mool-gyul' (new wave)

Movement for Seoul Education, which focuses on reforming educational methods. To maximize the success of this educational reform, many policy initiatives and programs have been launched to help teachers become better teachers. Surprisingly, there was not any initiative to support new teachers at that time.

Since 1998, the Korean government has prepared a comprehensive development plan for the teaching profession covering the whole area of teacher-related policies that focuses on issues, such as preparation, recruitment, hiring, compensation, promotion, and professional development. The main purposes of such a plan are to attract competent and talented teachers and to help them become excellent teachers. Particularly, policies promoting the quality of in-service as well as pre-service teacher training are being implemented in order to attract and retain well-qualified teachers in the teaching profession. Among such efforts from the central government, any specific program and/or policy initiative to support new teachers has not been addressed. In sum, educators and policy makers appear to pay little attention to the difficulties that new teachers are faced with in the classroom in Korea.

However, the transition from a college student to a professional teacher is a tremendously dramatic change, although new teachers have spent more than 15 years in school as students. New teachers are often confronted with multiple responsibilities and challenges that are unfamiliar to them. New teachers commonly perceive a disconnection between their pre-service programs and the realities of real school and classroom (Fox, 1995;

Kuzmic, 1994; Kwon, 1999; Urzua, 1999). These difficulties cause new teachers to experience, for example, stress, anxiety, frustration, and isolation both in the classroom and in their personal lives (Kuzmic, 1994; David, 2000). As a consequence, a number of new teachers become indifferent to teaching (Scherer, 1999). It is apparent that new teachers need careful and systematic assistance during the beginning of their careers.

One of the most popular vehicles to support and retain new teachers is mentoring (Carter & Francis, 2000; Feiman-Nemse, 1996; Huling & Resta, 2001). Also, mentoring is a well-researched topic in today's education. Mentoring is typically defined as a learning process between an experienced and a less experienced person in which the mentor provides guidance, advice, support, and feedback to the novices (Haney, 1997). School systems have developed effective mentoring programs to support new teachers. Many educators have also been interested in implementing the most successful mentoring program possible to overcome the challenges of the transition into teaching and attempts to alleviate some of the stress inherent in their first year of teaching (Moskowits & Stephens, 1997).

Numerous empirical studies have provided critical evidence that mentoring has a positive influence not only on new teachers but also mentor teachers. Recently, much literature on mentoring has been mainly focused on the issues of the mentors' role (Alliston & Grymes, 1999; David, 2000; Ganser, 1996; Koki, 1997; Runyan, 1999), definition of mentoring (Alliston & Grymes, 1999; Giebelhaus & Bendixon-Noe, 1997), mentor training

and selection (Giebelhaus & Bendixon-Noe, 1997), benefits of mentoring (Alliston & Grymes, 1999; Wollman-Bonilla, 1997), the new teachers' needs regarding what they want to learn (Ballantyne et al, 1997; Freiberg et al, 1994), and mentoring stages (Ford & Parsons, 2000; Runyan, 1999).

Whitebook, Hnatiuk, & Bellm (1996) criticize conventional teacher induction innovations because most of them have focused exclusively on the needs of new teachers, such as Ballantyne's at al. (1997) and Freiberg's et al. (1994). There is no doubt that new teachers are at the heart of the needs assessment stage for planning mentoring programs. Although the prime target of needs assessment for mentoring program planning must be new teachers, the mentoring needs perceived by mentors must also be included. In other words, mentors should have a voice in designing programs on mentoring, as well as new teachers. Furthermore, effective mentoring programs should be directed toward meeting the stated needs from all levels of participants. Without accurate data on needs from active participants on mentoring, planning is difficult and results are likely to be disappointing to all stakeholders, including new teachers, mentors, and administrators. Basically, the contents of mentoring programs need to be developed according to the specific needs of all levels of active participants.

Although there are a few studies that identify the needs of mentoring as described above, most efforts have focused on meeting to the needs of new teachers. In other words, there is

noticeably less information about the mentoring needs perceived by mentors in regard to mentoring program contents. As a consequence, it appears vital to understand more deeply what the mentors expect to teach based on their experience with the new teachers, as much as what beginning teachers want to learn.

Purpose of statement:

This study was conducted to determine the contents of a mentoring program being developed in Seoul, Korea for new elementary teachers. To do this, the study was undertaken to assess what new elementary teachers want to learn and what experienced teachers, who were regarded as potential mentors, expect to teach to beginning teachers. Finally the study can help school districts and institutions of higher education make informed decisions pertaining to mentoring programs.

Research questions:

This study is exploratory in nature, and it has the following research questions:

1. What do new teachers want to learn from their mentor in terms of classroom-focused issues and outside classroom issues?

2. What do potential mentors think that new teachers need to be taught by them in terms of classroom-focused issues and outside classroom issues?

3.   To what extent do the needs of new teachers differ from the mentoring needs perceived by potential mentors in the area of mentoring program contents?

Setting, Data Sources, and Collection Procedures

Setting. Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education accommodated 490 elementary schools with 410 new teachers in 1998. The Office of Education recruits and employs new teachers for public schools through an officially conducted competitive test. There are a variety of opportunities for professional development, which are supported by the Office of Education. Except for an orientation program for 60 hours before entering the school, however, there is no formal induction program such as mentoring for beginning teachers in Seoul, Korea.

Data sources. In 1998, data for this study came from surveys of new elementary teachers and the experienced teachers who were regarded as potential mentors by the new teachers. A new teacher was defined for purposes of this study as a teacher who was in the first teaching year in 1998. All of the new teachers were employed full-time in public schools.

Collection procedures. For convenience, investigators randomly chose 30 elementary schools that employed more than three new teachers in 1998, and then visited the schools to distribute the questionnaire to 105 new teachers at the beginning of second semester of the 1998 school year. After completing the questionnaire, the new teachers were asked to identify who would best serve as a potential mentor for himself or herself. The investigators

also distributed the questionnaire to 105 experienced teachers who were considered as potential mentors by the new teachers. Finally, a total of valid 96 new teachers and 87 experienced teachers responded yielding a 91.4 and 82.9 percent response rate respectively.

In terms of respondents' demographics, 9.4 percent of the new teachers were male and 90.6 percent female. 28.9 percent of the experienced teachers were male and 71.1 percent female. With respect to years of teaching experience, the mean of the experienced teachers was 8.3. More specifically, 26.5 percent had less than 10 years teaching experience, 37.3 percent had between 11 and 20 years, 28.9 percent were between 21 years and 30 years. And another 7.2 percent had over 31 years teaching experience.

Methods

The investigators developed a separate questionnaire for new teachers and experienced teachers after a review of the literature related to educational administration and teacher education on new teachers. Specifically, instruments were drawn based on Boccia's work (1991). Each questionnaire was developed to collect data regarding the needs of mentoring and contained 35 items measuring mainly two dimensions: classroom focused issues (20 items) and outside classroom issues (13 items). Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which the respondent wanted to learn (a questionnaire for new teachers) or needed to teach (a

questionnaire for potential mentors) in regard to each item along a 5-point Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items to collect data on gender and year of teaching were also included.

Both questionnaires were reviewed for content and face validity by a panel of eight experts, consisting of two faculty members, two experienced teachers, two new teachers, and two principals. The questionnaires were revised according to their suggestions. The revised questionnaires were field tested on two groups of new teachers and experienced teachers respectively. The field test was designed to identify confusing items, provide suggestions for improving the format and wording, and evaluate the overall appearance of the instruments.

Through a pilot test, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. For new teachers, Cronbach's alpha score was .91, including .88 for classroom-focused issues and .84 for outside classroom issues. On the other instrument, Cronbach's alpha score was .97, including .95 for classroom-focused issues and .94 for outside classroom issues. The instruments were determined to have very high reliability. Because the instruments were derived from Boccia's work (1991) in the U.S., several items needed to be revised based on school culture in Korea. Therefore, to establish stronger validity, construct validity was considered through factor analysis with principle component analysis as an extraction method and varimax as a rotation method. Finally, as determined by a panel of

experts, 20 items were grouped into classroom-focused issues, and 13 items were categorized into outside classroom issues.

Results

Question one

Overall, the new teachers in this study have higher mentoring needs in terms of classroom focused issues ($\underline{M}$ = 3.56, $\underline{SD}$ = .51) than they do in terms of outside classroom issues ($\underline{M}$ = 3.17, $\underline{SD}$ = .53).

Table 1 presents the rank order of 20 classroom-focused issues by mean response value. The new teachers in this study had a moderately high response value for all items. The highest priority revealed is handing students with special needs ($\underline{M}$ = 4.19, $\underline{SD}$ = .91). The other topics ranked high priority include helping students with learning problems ($\underline{M}$ = 4.07, $\underline{SD}$ = .89), curriculum integration ($\underline{M}$ = 3.73, $\underline{SD}$ = .95), and dealing with individual differences ($\underline{M}$ = 3.71, $\underline{SD}$ = .91). Conversely, using technology in the classroom ($\underline{M}$ = 3.06, $\underline{SD}$ = 1.07) and physical classroom atmosphere ($\underline{M}$ = 3.19, $\underline{SD}$ = .99) are regarded as relatively lower priorities. However, all items range between 4.19 and 3.06, indicating that the new teachers are faced with various difficulties to conduct successful classroom activities for students.

Table 1. Rank order of classroom-focused issues: the beginning teachers

Rank Order	Topics	M	SD
1	Handling students with special needs	4.19	.91
2	Helping students with learning problems	4.07	.89

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3	Curriculum integration	3.73	.95
4	Dealing with individual differences	3.71	.91
5	Classroom control	3.68	.93
6	Physical/emotional stress in the classroom	3.67	1.02
7	Student disciplines	3.65	.95
8	Securing learning motivation	3.60	.90
9	Preparing instructional materials	3.60	.92
10	Selecting and adapting curriculum	3.55	.99
11	Rapport with students	3.52	.89
12	Classroom conference with parents	3.49	.93
13	Helping at-risk students	3.48	.71
14	Knowledge of varied teaching techniques	3.46	.88
15	Assessing student learning	3.44	.86
16	Classroom management	3.43	.94
17	Knowledge of subject matter	3.29	.91
18	Effective lesson planning	3.22	.94
19	Physical classroom atmospheres	3.19	.99
20	Using technology in instruction	3.06	1.07
Total		3.56	.52

Table 2 presents the rank order of 13 outside classroom issues by mean response value.

All items range between 3.48 and 2.76, indicating that the new teachers acknowledge

moderate response value of mentoring needs in regard to outside classroom issues.

Information regarding building administration (M = 3.48, SD = .70), how to conduct action

research (M = 3.34, SD = .84), isolation from other teachers (M = 3.34, SD = .95), and

understanding of various supervision (M = 3.32, SD = .85) are ranked as higher priorities. On

the other hand, participating in professional development (M = 2.76, SD = 1.05) and relations

with other teachers (M = 2.81, SD = .97) are regarded as relatively lower priorities.

Table 2. Rank order of outside classroom issues: the beginning teachers

Rank Order	Topics	M	SD
1	Information regarding building administration	3.48	.70
2	How to conduct action research	3.34	.95
2	Isolation from other teachers	3.34	.84
4	Understanding of various supervision	3.32	.85
5	Duty assignment	3.30	.91

6	Paper work	3.27	.86
7	Student drug abuse	3.26	1.23
8	Building administration	3.23	.87
9	Managing conflicts among teachers	3.15	.97
10	Communication skills with other teachers	3.05	.87
11	Record keeping and administrative matters	3.04	.84
12	Relations with other teachers	2.81	.97
13	Participating in professional development	2.76	1.05
Total		3.17	.53

Question two

Results on question two were similar to those of question one; the experienced teachers

who are regarded as potential mentors by the new teachers in this study have higher

mentoring needs in terms of classroom focused issues (M = 3.80, SD = .76) than they do in

terms of outside classroom issues (M = 3.61, SD = .79). In both issues, all mentoring need

items responses had moderately high response values. Specifically, in the case of classroom-

focused issues, six among twenty item responses had high mean values.

Table 3 presents the rank order of 20 classroom-focused issues by mean response value.

The result shows what the experienced teachers want to teach to her or his beginning teachers.

Mean response value ranges between 4.20 and 3.11. Two needs, classroom control (M =

4.20, SD = 1.03) and student discipline (M = 4.20, SD = .91), stand out clearly as the top

priorities. Next, classroom management (M = 4.14, SD = 1.03), handling students with

special needs (M = 4.10, SD = .93), rapport with students (M = 4.06, SD = 1.03) and

classroom conference with parents (M = 4.06, SD = .90) are ranked as higher needs than

other items. Physical/emotional stress (M = 3.11, SD = .98), knowledge of subject matter (M

= 3.46, SD = 1.08), and preparing instructional materials (M = 3.57, SD = 1.25) are viewed

as relatively lower priorities on mentoring.

Table 3. Rank order of classroom-focused issues: the potential mentors

Rank Order	Topics	M	SD
1	Classroom control	4.20	.91
1	Student disciplines	4.20	.91
3	Classroom management	4.14	1.03
4	Handling students with special needs	4.10	.93
5	Rapport with students	4.06	1.03
5	Classroom conference with parents	4.06	.90
7	Knowledge of varied teaching techniques	4.00	1.05
8	Helping at-risk students	3.92	.84
9	Effective lesson planning	3.86	1.21
10	Securing learning motivation	3.77	1.05
11	Selecting and adapting curriculum	3.76	1.09
12	Helping students with learning problems	3.75	1.09
13	Assessing student learning	3.71	1.22
14	Curriculum integration	3.69	1.04
15	Using technology in instruction	3.67	1.47
16	Dealing with individual differences	3.58	1.21
17	Preparing instructional materials	3.57	1.25
18	Physical classroom atmospheres	3.52	1.13
19	Knowledge of subject matter	3.46	1.09
20	Physical/emotional stress in the classroom	3.11	.98
Total		3.80	.76

Table 4 presents the rank order of 13 outside classroom issues by mean response value.

All items range between 3.92 and 3.34, which indicate moderate high response value of

mentoring needs regarding outside classroom issues as well as classroom focused issues. In

other words, the experienced teachers acknowledge the new teachers need to learn all 13

outside classroom issues. Etiquette and manner toward the experienced teachers (M = 3.92,

SD = 1.00), isolation from other teachers (M = 3.90, SD = 1.02), record keeping and

administration (M = 3.86, SD = .95), and communication skills with other teachers (M = 3.81,

SD = .98) are ranked as higher priorities than other items. In contrast, participating in

professional development (M = 3.34, SD = 1.21), duty assignment (M = 3.35, SD = .1.01),

and understanding of various supervision (M = 3.40, SD = 1.04) are regarded as relatively

lower priorities.

Table 4. Rank order of outside classroom issues: the potential mentors

Rank Order	Topics	M	SD
1	Etiquette and manner toward the experienced teachers	3.92	1.00
2	Isolation from other teachers	3.90	1.02
3	Record keeping and administration matters	3.86	.95
4	Communication skills with other teachers	3.81	.98
5	Managing conflicts among teachers	3.77	.98
6	Paper work	3.67	1.00
7	Student drug abuse	3.54	1.10
8	Information regarding district administration	3.45	1.06
9	Understanding of various supervision	3.40	1.04
10	How to conduct action research	3.36	1.26
11	Understanding of various supervision	3.35	1.01
12	Duty assignment	3.35	1.01
13	Participating in professional development	3.34	1.21
Total		3.61	.79

Question three

First, a t-test was used to determine of there is a significant difference in terms of

priorities regarding classroom-focused issues between the beginning teachers (N = 86) and

the experienced teachers (N = 82). The results show that statistically significant difference is

found between the beginning teachers (M = 3.56, SD = .52) and the experienced teachers (M

= 3.80, SD = .76), t (166) = 2.34, p = .02. On the other hand, in light of outside classroom

issues, the study also examined if there were a significant difference between both groups-

the beginning teachers (N = 90) and the experienced teachers (N = 80). The results also

show that there was a statistically significant difference between the beginning teachers ($\underline{M}$ =

3.17, $\underline{SD}$ = .53) and the experienced teachers ($\underline{M}$ = 3.61, $\underline{SD}$ = .79), $\underline{t}$ (168) = 4.30, p = .00.

As a consequence, the degree of needs of new teachers on mentoring in regard to both

classroom-focused issues and outside classroom issues differs from those of experienced

teachers.

The results of question one and two are summarized in table 5, which lists the identified

needs in the top five priorities for each group in both issues by mean response value. First, in

terms of classroom-focused issues, although there is overlap between both groups, in general,

different needs in different priority order are revealed. Both groups single out only two needs,

handling students with special needs and classroom control, as common high priorities. The

remaining six were uncovered as important areas of need by only one group. On the other

hand, in the case of outside classroom issues, no distinct need is chosen as a priority by either

group, with the exception of isolation from other teacher. The remaining eight were revealed

separately by one of the groups.

Table 5. Summary of the top five priorities revealed by groups and issues

	Classroom focused issues		Outside classroom issues	
Rank	Beginning teachers	Experienced teachers	Beginning teachers	Experienced teachers
1	Handling students with special needs	Classroom Control	Building administration	Etiquette and manner toward the

				experienced teachers
2	Helping students with learning problems	Students discipline	How to conduct action research	Isolation from other teachers
3	Curriculum integration	Classroom management	Isolation from other teachers	Record keeping and administrative matters
4	Dealing with individual differences	Handling students with special needs	Understanding of various supervision	Communication skills with other teachers
5	Classroom Control	Rapport with students	Duty assignment	Managing conflicts among teachers

Discussion and Conclusion

In terms of determining mentoring contents, this study examines the needs of new teachers as well as those as perceived by potential mentors. In other words, this study identifies what the new teachers want to learn from their mentors and what potential mentors expect to teach for new teachers. The study reveals that the new elementary teachers have higher mentoring needs for classroom focused issues than outside classroom issues. While two items of outside classroom issues are singled out as moderate responses, most items in both issues indicate moderately high responses values. Also, the experienced teachers who were regarded as potential mentors by the new teachers in this study have higher mentoring priorities for classroom focused issues than outside classroom issues. All items indicated moderately high response values. In both issues, the differences in mentoring needs between the new teachers and the potential mentors are statistically significant. More specifically, in terms of mentoring contents of both issues, the needs of potential mentors were significantly higher than those of the new teachers.

Furthermore, considering the top five priority needs identified for each group in both

issues by mean response value, in general, the different needs in different priority order are

revealed. Of classroom-focused issues, while the new teachers tend to weigh the contents

related to teaching activities, greater concerns addressed by potential mentors are likely to be

focused on classroom managerial activities as mentoring contents. Of outside classroom

issues, the new teachers want to seek information in regard to their school contexts and tasks

from their mentors. On the other hand, potential mentors appear to believe that developing

and maintaining successful human relationships with colleagues in the building must be the

most important content which new teachers need to be taught from mentors. Consequently,

since the priorities between the new teachers and potential mentors are significantly different,

a decision-making process that produces the contents, which should be included into

effective mentoring programs that are expected to help new teachers, appears to be complex

and multifaceted.

Implication

When applied to developing and providing mentoring program for new teachers, the

results of this study have significant implications. Based on learner-centered paradigm of

education, program planners have paid more attention to the voice of new teachers as the

target audience in the development stage of mentoring programs. As shown by this study, for

instance, a program developer working with the priorities of new teachers would probably not propose classroom managerial activities and question regarding how to establish successful human relationships with colleagues in the building. Similarly, if a program developer were to pay more attention to the needs perceived by the potential mentors, the important concerns of the new teachers, such as helping students with learning problems or building administration, would not be included in a mentoring program. As a consequence, to develop more effective mentoring programs based on accurate data, all active participants including not only new teachers but also mentor teachers should be involved in the decision-making stage for mentoring contents.

As discussed above, this study reveals conflicting priorities in regard to mentoring contents between the new teachers and the potential mentors. Now we need to ask how to negotiate such conflicting interests between groups in order to building effective mentoring programs. In other words, whose interests will be represented and how will those interests be successfully negotiated in practice? Although there are common needs identified by one group, it is important to recognize that each teacher has different needs at different times and various situations. In this vein, the practical tactics and strategies to negotiate complex interests could be varied according to the specific context and perception of planners. As a result, further study needs to be conducted to uncover how the conflicting needs between groups drawn from this study can be negotiated in the practice.

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