

MENTORING FOR NEWLY RECRUITED SCHOOL TEACHERS: CONCEPT, FEATURES AND MODELS

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Abstract

The present paper is an attempt to conceptualize the concept teacher mentoring and its need and significance. Teacher mentoring is a complex and multi-dimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing and supporting a newly recruited or beginning teacher. Teacher mentoring is a process which provides a bridge between pre-service teacher preparation and in-service practice through helping newly recruited teachers to meet the specific educational and psychological and social needs in the beginning of their career. The paper discusses the distinctive features and characteristics of effective teacher mentoring as it should focus on supporting new teachers improve or modify teaching in accordance with required and desirable standards, it is quickly react to the evolving needs of newly recruited teachers and their students. Mentoring is viewed as a complex professional process that should be developed gradually and it includes careful selection and preparation of mentors as well as it prefers experienced teachers as mentors and involves them in the design and evaluation of mentoring programme. The paper also throws light on the criteria for selecting mentors for newly recruited teachers. The paper also mentions some different and important models of teacher mentoring; Informal Mentoring, Intentional Informal Mentoring, Formal Mentoring, Functional Mentoring, Group Mentoring, Mosaic Mentoring, Peer Mentoring, Peer Tutoring, Near-Peer Mentoring Model, E-Mentoring, Multiple mentoring, Reverse mentoring, Triad mentoring and Self-Directed Mentoring etc.

Key Words-: Newly Recruited Teacher, Teacher Mentoring, Mentor, Mentee, Characters & Features, Mentoring Models, Selection Criteria.

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INTRODUCTION

The struggle of newly recruited teachers in the beginning period of their profession is currently a renowned fact in this world. Feiman Nemser asserts that “no matter what initial preparation student-teachers receive in pre-service training, teachers are never fully prepared for classroom realities and responsibilities associated with meeting the needs of a rapidly growing, increasingly diverse student population”(Feiman-Nemser, S.,2001). Therefore, in the teaching profession newly recruited teachers begin their teaching profession with orientation and mentoring where they get the opportunity to know and be familiar with the operation of the institution. According to Smith and Ingersoll, newly recruited teachers are mostly supported through getting chance of working with experienced teachers and mentors. Existing researches regarding support of newly recruited teachers through mentoring have focused on their relationship to the system and instruction and also argued that mentoring supports newly recruited teachers to be familiar with institution’s norms, rules and regulations, working with colleagues, dealing with students, teaching methods and approaches (Ingersoll, R., & Smith, T. 2003).

THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER MENTORING

Mentoring has been defined and interpreted in various ways. It is generally agreed that it is a process which includes numerous developmental phases of the mentoring and the application of cognitive developmental theory (Bey and Homes, 1992). Head, Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1992) write that the “heart and soul of mentoring grows out of belief in the value and worth of people and an attitude toward education that focuses upon passing the torch to the next generation of teachers.” The mentoring process is more than merely helping newly recruited teachers into the profession and system through support and guidance etc. Shadio (1996) says that the spirit of mentorship comes from “a commitment to education, a hope for its future, and a respect for those who enter into its community.” Research points out that mentoring is such a process which is more challenging than teaching in the classroom. Moreover, it happens sometimes that a well experienced teacher fails to evaluate the teaching performance of newly recruited teachers (Bey and Holmes, 1992).

Teacher mentoring is a complex and multi-dimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing and supporting newly beginning teachers. In this process, mentor teachers guide, train, suggest and support newly recruited and less experienced teachers. Generally, newly recruited teachers

are paired with more experienced and old teachers who can describe rules and regulations and policies of the school, share necessary materials and other required resources, support in teaching and learning problems and support in personal and professional growth and development (Feiman-Nemser and Parker, 1992).

Guyton & Hildago suggest that the culture and context of the school can affect the mentoring process of newly recruited teachers. The methods in which newly recruited teachers perform and manage themselves in terms of their temperament, character, faith, and knowledge acquisition are likely to be extremely affected by elements that are different from the school setting. Tillman also believes that “teacher mentors in urban schools may also be called upon to help new teachers reflect on and understand the unique histories and experiences and the varied learning styles and needs of students from various racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.”

According to Tillman, school teachers typically teach such children who are often not intrinsically motivated and who mostly did not get family support, in schools where resources may not be readily available, and where tradition may not be followed in instructions and teaching methods. As a result, mentors of newly recruited teachers in an urban system have a very different role to play in comparison to the mentors serving teachers in rural or semi-urban system. Tillman appreciates the role of the teacher mentor, but also highlights the role of the school administration with respect to careful examination of the mentoring process.

FEATURES OF EFFECTIVE MENTORING

Odell, Huling, and Sweeny mentioned the ideal qualities and characteristics of mentoring and those are given below:

- Experienced teachers are selected as mentors and mentors are included in design and evaluation of mentoring programme.
- Focus should be on helping newly recruited or less experienced teachers learn to deal and teach according to professional standards.
- It should be responsive to the growing needs of newly recruited or less experienced teachers and their students.

- It is based on the view that becoming a good teacher is a continuous and developmental process.
- Mentoring is considered as a professional process that should be acquired and developed gradually and over a certain period of time.
- Mentoring programme includes selection, preparation, development for new mentors and supporting newly recruited teachers.
- Mentoring programmes are planned, implemented, and evaluated collectively and jointly by key stakeholders.
- Mentoring primarily aims and focuses on allowing newly recruited or less experienced teachers to learn how to teach and sustain and prosper in the teaching profession.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF MENTOR TEACHERS

- It is suggested that a Mentor Teacher should have undergone such training at least three years or more of teaching experience.
- A Mentor Teacher should be able to understand, prepare and use effective instructional procedures, teaching methods, teaching strategies and promote suitable and beneficial professional practice.
- A Mentor Teacher should be willing and happy with his/her schedule, and should be able to provide careful mentoring service and evaluation of newly recruited teachers.
- A Mentor Teacher should possess the abilities required to observe and assess the performance of newly recruited teacher and to provide corrective feedback to nurture positive professional development in newly recruited or less experienced teachers.
- A Mentor Teacher should be able to share his/her pedagogical and subject knowledge of effective teaching clearly and professionally.
- A Mentor Teacher should develop and create conducive environment to amplify opportunities for newly recruited teachers to learn from their fallacy and mistakes.
- A Mentor Teacher should set the pace to integrate newly recruited teachers into the classroom setting and increase gradually levels of their responsibilities. A certain period is required for new teachers to control of the classroom setting.
- A Mentor Teacher should present his/her self as a model and ideal teacher for newly recruited or less experienced teachers.

DIFFERENT MODELS OF MENTORING

Informal Mentoring

Informal mentoring is critically important to career satisfaction and success. Formal mentoring is not meant to replace informal mentoring but to supplement and strengthen it. Evidence clearly indicates that formal mentoring improves and brings a positive difference in achieving professional prosperity but it is different from informal mentoring in various significant aspects: as formal mentoring is intentional, its participants are held accountable and it is available to all faculties.

Intentional Informal Mentoring

Intentional Informal Mentoring involves overtly recognizing and supporting ways in which colleagues within a unit or professional network can serve as unassigned mentors (individually and collectively) and facilitate personal and professional development of its members. It recognizes that mentors are important and play different, critical roles at different times including that of communicator, advisor, coach, broker, advocate and often a combination of each of these.

Formal Mentoring

Formal mentoring when one or various mentors are formally allocated and assigned responsibility to support and facilitate the professional development to newly recruited teachers (known as mentees) through some certain activities as guiding, teaching, influencing and supporting and it engages and connects with other colleagues and professional networks. Formal mentoring is basically voluntary and two way process which binds both the mentors and mentees in a mutually beneficial relationship. Both strengthen and maximize that beneficial relationship for the purpose of professional and career development.

Functional Mentoring

This involves a project-oriented mentoring relationship in which the mentee finds a mentor for a specific skill acquisition or pre-defined project. For instance, writing a grant proposal, instituting a clinical program, setting up a fellowship program or writing a focused manuscript.

Group Mentoring

This can involve several layers of mentors and mentees who vary by rank and experience. Often 1-3 senior faculty members or school teachers mentor several junior faculties in a group setting. They engage in a flow of conversation to share experiences, ideas and tips. It serves well to offload the mentoring demands on the few senior faculty members.

Mosaic Mentoring

In order to achieve the multi-dimension guidance needed, faculty in academic medicine often requires a number of different mentors during their career. Mosaic mentoring can be viewed as a longitudinal landscape of career mentoring for an individual faculty or it can refer to a specific type of group mentoring. In mosaic group mentoring, a diverse range of individuals of different ranks, ages, genders, races, skills and experience come together in a non-hierarchical community. Benefits include collaboration, reduced pressure on mentors, merging small pools together, and success in both gender and minority mentoring.

Peer Mentoring

One of the biggest challenges that peer mentoring programmes face, and higher education more broadly, is that of student participation and engagement which results in increasing attrition rate. It is widely argued that such attrition is primarily the result of student disengagement with their studies, peers and institutions (Cooper, R. (2018). Peer mentoring programs have attempted to reverse this attrition rate and increase retention of newly recruited school teachers by providing programmes that offer strong interpersonal and academic support. Indeed, after years of collecting and analyzing data there is now a strong consensus that peer mentoring is effective and helpful for learning, it creates a sense of belongingness, and it supports in transition into the university environment (Dawson, van der Meer, Skalicky, & Cowley, 2014). Peer mentoring programs are broadly based around the learning theories of Vygotsky (1980).

Peer Tutoring

Embedded models of peer mentoring can sometimes be labeled as “peer tutoring”. Peer tutoring is used to describe a range of different models in which experienced teachers assist less experienced teachers in their work. This can be in one-on-one or group engagements, as well as embedded in a classroom (Goodlad, S., & Hirst, B. 1989).

Near-Peer Mentoring Model

This mentoring model was first used at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) and later ten more Army research centers and one Navy centre in United States adopted this model. This model is defined as summer teaching internship additionally with research internship. In this model, college and university students and are instructors in the “Gains in the Education of Mathematics and Science” (GEMS) programme for school students (Jett, Anderson, & Yourick, 2005).

E-Mentoring

In E-mentoring, both the mentor teacher and mentee teacher meet virtually through internet as e-mail, Skype, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Google Hangouts and other group chat apps and social sites etc. This model is really helpful in distance learning where mentor and mentee teacher are not at the same place and where participants have to travel for a long distance.

Multiple mentoring

It means a newly recruited teacher has been provided more than one mentor. Multiple mentors support and guide them in different activities and assignments as well as provide different perspectives and one mentee teacher meets each mentor separately. Multiple mentoring holds its importance as like mentor network.

Reverse mentoring

In reverse mentoring, a junior or less experienced teacher is assigned the responsibility of mentoring to support and guide a more senior and experienced teacher or the older generation teacher to help them keep aware and informed about new technologies, new rule and regulations, teaching strategies and approaches and modification in education system etc. This model of mentoring is valuable in present scenario of rapid changing and development of science and technology especially in the field of information technology (Fall 2010).

Triad mentoring

Triad mentoring comprises three individuals and it has two different forms and structures; (1) It comprises one more experienced and senior teacher as mentor and two newly recruited teachers as mentees. (2) It includes one the most experienced and senior teacher and one middle-level (having prior experience of teaching) teacher as well as one just newly recruited teacher. In such model, newly recruited teachers get benefit from direct help and support of mentors as well as indirectly through observation. This model is beneficial when there are mentees are more in number than mentors.

Self-Directed Mentoring

This model of teacher mentoring is similar to one-to-one mentoring model and in this model mentees are facilitated and given options to choose their mentor from the given list of mentor teachers. Here, it is mentee who initiates the process and asks and selects one volunteer mentor for assistance and guidance etc. This model is successfully used in institution and organization whose members know how to take initiative. Moreover this model can also work if a programme manager is not available and this model needs and requires only limited support within institution and organization as well as this model gives good result in mismatched mentor-mentee (Fall 2010).

CONCLUSION

Teaching is one the most challenging profession and needs continuous input especially in present scenario and at the time of science and technology. Teaching is such a profession where only subject expertise and mastery is not enough moreover, it needs continuous professional development and training to fulfill the growing needs of the society. As a result, newly recruited teachers are in the most critical and difficult year of their professional career. Teacher mentoring is a complex and multi-dimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing and supporting a newly recruited or beginning teacher in the pivotal time of their professional career. Mentoring develops and creates a conducive environment for them to feel connectedness in the profession and to avoid isolation which results in retaining newly recruited teachers in the institution and organization. Retaining newly recruited teachers are necessary because studies found that teacher attrition is the higher in comparison to other professions and teachers are twice as likely to stay

in the profession if they are provided support and guidance in the beginning through mentoring. It has been proven that mentoring is not only important but necessary support which must be provided in the beginning career of teachers. So, it was needed to discuss the concept of mentoring as its distinctive features and some models used in teacher mentoring. The paper also brought into your notice the distinctive features and characteristics of effective teacher mentoring as it should concentrate on supporting new teachers improve or modify teaching in accordance with required and desirable standards. Some different and important models of teacher mentoring were discussed above and they are; Informal Mentoring, Intentional Informal Mentoring, Formal Mentoring, Functional Mentoring, Group Mentoring, Mosaic Mentoring, Peer Mentoring, Peer Tutoring, Near-Peer Mentoring Model, eMentoring, Multiple Mentoring, Reverse Mentoring, Triad Mentoring and Self-Directed Mentoring etc. These models of mentoring are common and generally used in various educational institutions and educational organizations in various countries of the world.

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