



Instructions for authors and further details:

<http://ijheld.lakeheadu.ca>

The Impact of Applying the Principles of the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) on Mentoring New Early Childhood Educators

Sara Shahbazi¹, Geri Salinitri¹, Angela Miloyevich², & Alyssa Palazzolo¹

1) University of Windsor

2) Greater Essex County District School Board

Published online: July 15, 2015

Edition period: Volume 1, 2015

To cite this article: Shahbazi, S., Salinitri, G., Miloyevich, A., & Palazzolo, A. (2015). The impact of applying the principles of the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) on mentoring new early childhood educators. *The International Journal of Holistic Early Learning and Development*, 1, 68-87.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

The Impact of Applying the Principles of the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) on Mentoring New Early Childhood Educators

Sara Shahbazi

University of Windsor

Geri Salinitri

University of Windsor

Angela Miloyevich

Greater Essex County District School Board

Alyssa Palazzolo

University of Windsor

Abstract

The Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) aims to support the initiatives of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in Ontario's Full-Day Kindergarten program by providing ECEs with support and guidance to facilitate professional efficacy and student success. We applied the mentoring component of the New Teacher Induction Program to first year ECEs in FDK and investigated the program's impact from the perspective of mentees and mentors. New ECEs were mentored by experienced ECEs working for the board. Study outcomes indicated the following themes among the participants: role as a mentor, professional development, reciprocal learning, and developing relationships. Challenges of the study were lack of proximity and time. Mentees also felt that the program did not change the existing relationship with their teaching partner. Overall, participants expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to engage in professional development and an interest in continuing the mentorship program.

In the province of Ontario, Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Education (OME) aims to enhance the skills and performance of new teachers by providing professional development programs (OME, 2010b). To enable teacher success, the OME mandates that all first year teachers participate in a mentoring program (OME, 2010b), the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), which is designed to guide newly employed teachers registered with the Ontario College of Teachers (OME, 2010b). However, with recent revisions to the *Ontario Kindergarten Program* (2006), the NTIP no longer satisfies all members of the kindergarten teaching staff. In September 2010, Ontario's kindergarten curriculum was replaced by the *Full-Day Early Learning – Kindergarten Program* (2010). The revision of the document has affected staffing, as an early years team now delivers the curriculum. The early years team includes a teacher belonging to the Ontario College of Teachers and a registered early childhood educator (ECE) from the College of Early Childhood Educators. Both educators are responsible for providing a rich, nurturing, and inquiry-based learning environment and are required to uphold the following duties:

- Jointly developing and delivering the daily activities in the classroom, including an emphasis on spontaneity to respond to the children's needs and interests.
- Organizing the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- Using a repertoire of pedagogical strategies to challenge and extend children's learning; monitoring and assessing children's progress using observation and pedagogical documentation.
- Liaising with families and the broader community.
- Assisting children during daily routines (OME, 2010a).

As the latest addition to the kindergarten staff, ECEs have to adapt to a new curriculum, work environment, and teaching partnership. The OME has not yet introduced a mentorship program for the professional development of newly hired ECEs. To ensure that ECEs experience successful professional growth and fulfill their designated roles and responsibilities in Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK), the Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) proposed a mentoring program for new ECEs based on the NTIP. The NTIP is a school-based program that began in 2006 with the purpose of supporting the growth and professional development of first year teachers (OME, 2010b). The yearlong program assists beginning teachers in developing the necessary skills and knowledge that will aid them in achieving professional and student success (OME, 2010b).

The *New Teacher Induction Program: Induction Elements Manual* (2010) supports and guides new teachers using a mentoring program. The program utilizes the skills of experienced teachers to assist newly employed educators. The manual defines a mentor as an individual who "provides ongoing support to enable the new teacher to improve his or her skills and confidence through participation in an effective, professional, confidential relationship" (OME, 2010b, p. 13). The role of the mentor also includes consulting, collaborating, coaching, reciprocal learning, and building rapport (OME, 2010b). The success of the NTIP mentoring program motivated the GECDSB to implement a similar program for new ECEs working in FDK. The project was designed to support the early childhood profession in FDK by recognizing the importance of ECEs' contribution to child development in the early years through a specialized mentorship program.

NTIP Adapted for the ECE Mentoring Program

The GECDSB aims to support the initiatives of new ECEs and the FDK program by recognizing the importance of all educators and the necessity of providing new employees with professional development, support, and guidance to facilitate professional efficacy and optimize student learning. In December 2013, the GECDSB launched the Early Childhood Educator Mentor Program. The ECE Mentor Program is a pilot project based on the NTIP. The purpose of this study was to discover how mentoring impacts ECEs in FDK. The mentor program utilizes the Ministry of Education's NTIP *Induction Elements Manual* (2010) and the College of Early Childhood Educators *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* (2011).

The ECE mentoring program's framework is based on Principle 6 of the *Early Learning Framework* (2007), "knowledgeable and responsive early childhood educators and other early learning practitioners are essential to early childhood settings" (p. 19). To facilitate the successful implementation of the ECE mentoring program, the GECDSB adapted the structure of the *Induction Elements Manual* to develop a mentoring guidebook. The guidebook was designed to facilitate clear expectations for the participants and to achieve successful program and educator outcomes through the use of release days and strategy forms. As a result, newly hired ECEs were paired with experienced ECEs working in the GECDSB. Mentors guided and collaborated with their mentees between the months of January and June and had 1.5 school days of release time (jelly days), which were spent at the discretion of mentor and mentee pairs.

Literature Review

In this review we focused on the literature that explores the complexity of the mentoring experience and research that has demonstrated success in mentoring groups. There is a growing body of literature on mentoring programs for ECEs, yet there are gaps in identifying the impact these programs have on the success of the ECEs and the relationship they build in the classroom community (Kiriakidis, 2011). As greater numbers of young children are being cared for in out-of-home settings, policymakers are focusing on the quality of early care (Peterson, Valk, Baker, Brugger, & Hightower, 2010). Further, formalizing the FDK team-teaching approach to include an Ontario College of Teachers qualified primary teacher and a qualified ECE as partners reflects a major change in the dynamics of the kindergarten staff (OME, 2010a).

Teachers entering into the education profession are faced with new challenges and stressors. They must endure the initial hardships of establishing a professional foundation, status, and improving student success (Gananathan, 2011; McCann, 2011). Hallam, Chou, Hite, and Hite (2012) argued that a teacher's work experience greatly affects his or her decision to remain in the profession. Adopting a mentoring program moves away from the traditional "sink or swim" model toward a paradigm that maximizes job satisfaction through collegial support (Hallam et al., 2012).

Mentoring is a reciprocal learning process that builds efficacy in the mentor and mentee by developing their confidence and positive attitudes toward teaching (Glassford & Salinitri, 2006; Kiriakidis, 2011). Peterson et al. (2010) defined mentoring as "a one-on-one long-term relationship between an expert and a novice that supports the mentee's professional, academic, or personal development" (p. 157). In building resilience, efficacy and pedagogy, formal mentoring programs target the skills and knowledge related to specific teaching and learning objectives (Peterson et al., 2010). Moreover, mentoring is important in providing sufficient emotional and psychological wellbeing in prescribed programs with minimal contact hours

(Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). Thus defining the type of assistance required within the first years of the profession is a way to accelerate the professional progress of new educators, so that they build the necessary skills to become effective teachers (Stanulis & Floden, 2009).

Professional development opportunities further contribute to the advancement of skill building and pedagogical knowledge (Duffy, 2003). Sheridan, Edwards, Marvin, and Knoche (2009) defined professional development as a learning process based on “how professionals move from awareness (knowledge) to action (practice) and to the adoption of particular dispositions in their professional repertoires” (p. 389). Professional development is reciprocated through the interactions of the mentor and mentee (McCaughtry, Cothran, Kulinna, Martin, & Faust, 2005). Both individuals are exposed to and engaged in a social-cultural learning experience throughout their relationship (Peterson et al., 2010). These experiences shed light on new perspectives and experiences, which affects the mentor and mentee’s professional practice and partnership (Kim, 2007; Patton et al., 2005).

As mentors and mentees transition through the relationship, learning is extended through a co-equal relationship (Awaya et al., 2001; Kim, 2007; White & Mason, 2006). Establishing the foundation for a successful relationship is dependent upon the initiatives of the mentor and the willingness of the mentee (Patton et al., 2005). As advocates for the mentee, mentors support, listen, empower, and encourage the beginning teacher’s initiatives, curiosities and inquiries (McCann, 2011). The supportive foundation encourages engagement and the development of an emotionally supportive bond that is built on trust, compassion, and the sharing of experiences (Awaya et al., 2001; McCann, 2011).

An effective partnership recognizes the importance of extending the relationship beyond a professional basis (McCaughtry et al., 2005). Peterson et al. (2010) investigated how ECE mentors and mentees negotiated the social and emotional realities of their working partnership. The mentoring relationship became a personal investment and a journey that involved knowledge, interpersonal skills, and the effort to create a personal connection. Establishing and maintaining this momentum encouraged open dialogue, confidence, and refined the mentees’ professional practice (Peterson et al., 2010).

The literature suggests that mentoring programs provide beginning educators with new perspectives, guidance, knowledge, and the confidence to achieve student and professional success. Moreover, such programs can foster a reciprocal relationship that encourages professional and personal growth through the interactions and experiences shared between mentors and mentees. This study was intended to expand on the existing research by uncovering the benefits of incorporating a mentoring program for ECEs in Ontario’s new kindergarten program.

Theoretical Framework

This study applies the theoretical framework of Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural learning theory and Lave and Wenger’s (1991) situated learning theory. In the context of sociocultural learning theory, learning occurs through active engagement that is mediated through cultural artefacts, activities and concepts (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The coexistence of different operations promotes the transcendence from a homogenous disposition to heterogeneous phenomenon (Kozulin, 2003). The process is facilitated by the theory that the human intention to engage and learn is constructed by the activity of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Social development promotes the learning and acquisition of

knowledge and skill through engagement in legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). Legitimate peripheral participation is an individual's participation with the social world, which later develops into a complex engagement known as full participation. It is similar to a formal or informal apprenticeship in which the learner is an observer and a participant who simultaneously absorbs and is engulfed by a culture of practice. The transcendence of learning gives explanation to the relationship between newcomers and experts, as well as the activities, identities, artefacts, and communities of knowledge and practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). These experiences extend educators' knowledge, understanding, and practice through observation and participation. In the context of professional development, the mentor and mentee are submerged in a social culture of learning, raising their teaching practice to a higher level of efficacy.

Purpose of the Study

The researchers applied the mentoring principles of the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) to create a mentoring program for newly hired ECEs in Ontario's new FDK program and investigated the impact of the program from the perspectives of the mentees and mentors.

Method

Participants

Mentors. All fulltime contract ECEs who were previously employed with the GECDSEB and were now working in the FDK program were invited by email to participate as mentors in a mentoring program for newly hired ECEs. All 16 of the ECEs contacted agreed to be part of this research project and agreed to be trained as mentors through the board's NTIP Mentoring Model Workshop, which took place over two sessions held in December 2013 and June 2014. At the end of the June workshop, mentors met to take part in a focus group. University of Windsor researchers, as well as Union and Human Resources representatives from the GECDSEB, attended both mentor training sessions.

Mentees. All ECEs in their first year of contract hiring were sent an invitational letter to partake in the mentoring program. Out of 43 newly hired ECEs, 29 volunteered to participate in the program.

Procedure

In December 2013, mentors attended the NTIP Mentoring Model Workshop provided by the GECDSEB and partially funded by the OME. At the end of the workshop, researchers distributed and collected a pre-study efficacy questionnaire, the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), which was designed to provide a deeper understanding of challenges teachers face in their school activities. The instrument is a 9-point Likert scale with 24 questions (Appendix A). Due to budgeting constraints, the GECDSEB was unable to relieve the mentees during school hours to attend the December 2013 workshop. This created a challenge in administering the pre-study efficacy questionnaire, thus mentees were sent a copy of the pre-study efficacy questionnaire via carrier.

In January 2014, the mentees were asked to review the list of available mentors and identify three possible matches. Human Resources representatives from the GECDSEB arranged the pairs.

Since there were more mentees than mentors, an email was sent to all mentors to confirm their willingness to take on more than one mentee. Those who agreed were assigned two to three mentees. Once the participants verified the matches, mentees were invited to contact their mentors to initiate the first meeting.

Mentors and mentees participated in three half-days of face-to-face mentoring (jelly days) from January to June 2014. To access the jelly days, mentors and mentees had to submit a request form (Appendix B) to their principal five days prior to the intended meeting date. The jelly days allowed the mentors and mentees to meet in person. For many, these days were used to explore each other's classrooms; however, the mentor and mentee were free to spend the time as they preferred. Mentors and mentees were also given a strategy form to prepare them for their meetings (Appendix C). The form was used to motivate the participants to plan ahead on topics for discussion and to address the mentees' current and prospective needs.

Mentors attended a second mentoring workshop held by the GECDSB in June 2014, at which time they completed the post efficacy questionnaire and participated in a focus group. Twelve out of 16 mentors were available to participate in the focus group discussion. The discussion was semi-structured; the researchers asked a series of questions (Appendix D) and encouraged organic discussion. Mentees were unable to attend the June workshop due to lack of funding. Instead, they were sent a copy of the efficacy questionnaire. The number of responses to the pre- and post-study efficacy questionnaire was low and not analyzable. Additionally, researchers faced challenges in arranging a focus group outside of the mentees' working hours, thus mentees were sent an open-ended, online questionnaire (Appendix E) to complete anonymously. Only 12 out of 29 mentees participated in the online questionnaire.

We used a triangulation mixed methods design to study the impact of mentoring on ECE participants. According to Creswell (2003), the triangulation design is the most commonly used mixed methods design to obtain complementary data on the same topic. This complementary approach combines the strengths of the quantitative method with those of the qualitative method to best understand the research problem. The researchers expanded on the quantitative results using the analysis of the qualitative focus group data and open-ended online questionnaire responses with the quantitative results of the pre and post Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale.

Analysis of Results

Mentor Responses: Pre- and Post-Study Efficacy Questionnaire

All 16 mentors completed a pre-study questionnaire, The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moren & Hoy, 2001); however, only 12 completed it post-study. In analyzing the data, we compared the average pre- and post-efficacy scores on each question and found that the overall average efficacy was 7.5 out of 9 or 83%. Thus the mentors were confident in their skills as ECEs when they started the program. This is not surprising because they were invited to voluntarily participate in the program. Those most confident or efficacious were more likely to agree. The post-study questionnaire average increased to 7.8 out of 9 or 86%. Efficacy increased in all 23 of the 24 questions (Fig. 1). In scoring the responses, we followed Tschannen-Moren and Hoy's (2001) subscale scores and found improvements in *Efficacy in Student Engagement*, *Efficacy in Instructional Practices*, and *Efficacy in Classroom Management*.

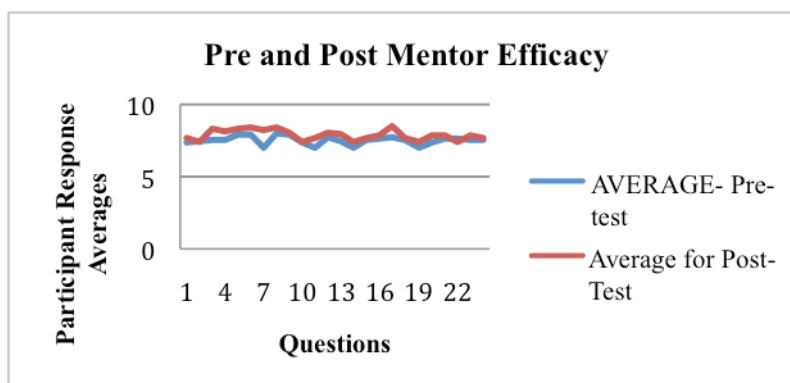
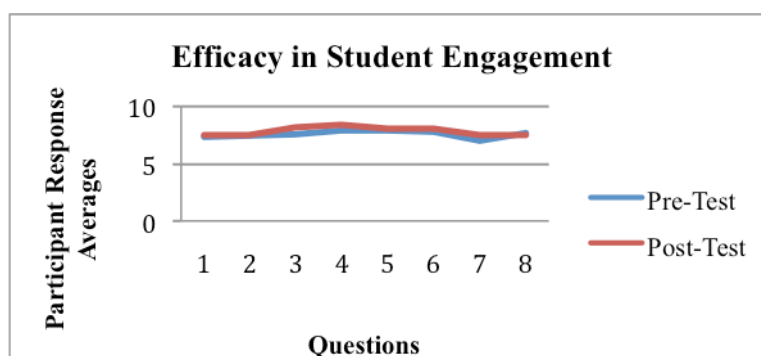


Figure 1. Pre and Post Overall Mentor Sense of Efficacy

Efficacy in Student Engagement. Although a slight increase in efficacy (+.33) was evident following the mentoring program (Fig. 2), the program showed a positive effect on the mentors' ability to engage with students. These mentors are certified, experienced ECEs whose ways of nurturing are embedded in their practice.

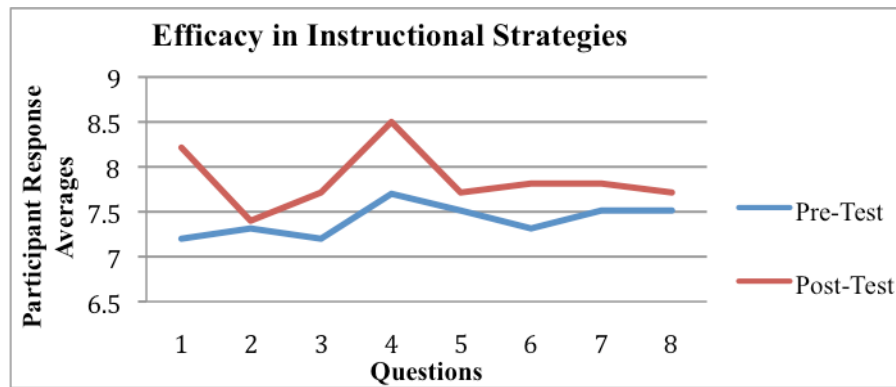


Efficacy in Student Engagement

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Subscale mean	7.54	7.86

Figure 2. Pre and Post Efficacy in Student Engagement Mean

Efficacy in Instructional Practices. Mentors demonstrated a more significant increase in instructional practices (+.45) (Fig. 3). Mentors felt that they learned more about their own practices and the practices of mentees through the development of a community of practice. Increase in efficacy of instructional practices correlates to increase in student success (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

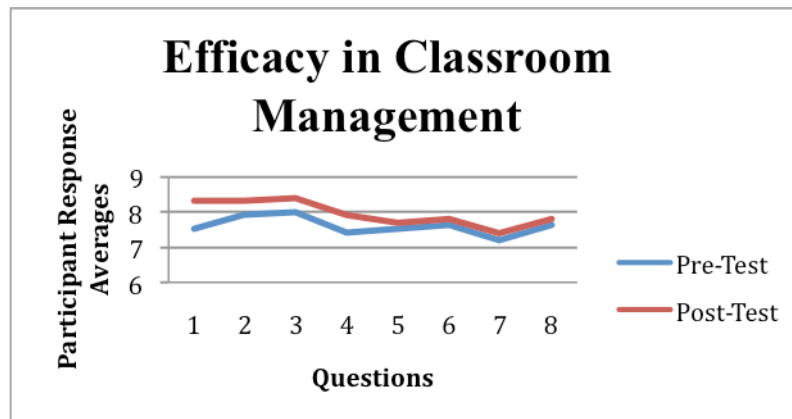


Efficacy in Instructional Strategies

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Subscale mean	7.40	7.85

Figure 3. Pre and Post Efficacy in Instructional Strategies Mean

Efficacy in Classroom Management. Mentors also showed improvement in efficacy in classroom management (Fig. 4) (+. 36). All participating mentors had been in classrooms for over 10 years, yet they showed that they could enhance their efficacy through this professional development opportunity.



Efficacy in Classroom Management

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Subscale mean	7.59	7.95

Figure 4. Pre and Post Efficacy in Classroom Management Mean

Mentoring programs were introduced to increase beginning teachers' usage of effective teaching practices (Roehrig et al., 2008). Roehrig et al. (2008) found that teachers with high achieving students emphasize academic instruction (instructional practice), keep transitions short (classroom management), match instruction to students' needs, and are clear and motivating (student engagement). These mentors have improved efficacy in all these areas, which should translate into improved student success.

Mentee Responses

The following are the common themes that arose from the mentees' responses to the online, anonymous questionnaire (Appendix E) used to measure professional development and mentoring effectiveness: professional development, developing relationships, and new learning.

Professional Development. The new ECEs (mentees) described their views on professional development and overall, the participants were satisfied because the program provided them with the opportunity to focus on their concerns and inquiries as new ECEs and encouraged them to be reflective in their practice.

The mentees' responses indicated that the jelly days had the most impact on the development of new approaches to assist their practice. A mentee explained her appreciation for the jelly days, "I really liked the idea of having the option to visit with an ECE who has experience. I think it was a great professional development opportunity as it was something different than a workshop." Others commented that jelly days provided opportunities to engage in the learning experience.

The mentees also recognized that the program motivated them to be reflective practitioners, as these excerpts from two questionnaires illustrate:

I feel this professional development was very useful and I looked forward to meeting with my mentor. Professional development, I feel is meant to self-assess your abilities within the classroom and better yourself as an individual and within the workplace.

[Professional development] is very valuable to not only new staff, but previously hired staff as well. I think these professional learning initiatives allow us to go out of the box, ask questions and to know the board's view on how things should be running.

These statements indicate that the mentees understood the need for professional development in order to improve their professional practice as educators. Further, there was consensus on the need to continue professional development "so that [they] as teachers continue to evolve."

Developing Relationships. Mentees were asked to use three adjectives to describe their relationship with their mentor. "Respectful" was the most used adjective; other adjectives included "caring," "helpful," "friendly," and "understanding." There was a sense that the mentees did experience the beginning stages of building a relationship; however, responses indicated that the progress was hindered by the limited time spent with their mentor and the lack of close proximity.

For most mentees, the time spent together was not only used to learn new teaching practices but also to develop a relationship. One mentee explained the process:

The first meeting, we got to know each other and spoke about what our strengths are in the classroom and where I felt I could use some suggestions. By the end, we were very excited to see each other and hope to stay in touch. The first meeting was more all about academics and many questions and by the end our conversation just came naturally.

Mentees utilized their time to establish the foundations of their rapport. Doing so initiated optimism for the potential of their growing relationship. This was evident as one mentee stated that she hoped “this would continue to be a partnership throughout [her] career.” However, it was confirmed that limited time prevented the relationships from evolving further. As one mentee commented:

I am not sure that an evolution has yet to take place because we have only met three times. We do plan to meet over the summer holiday and as we continue to build the relationship it will only be then that a true reflection can take place.

Here the mentee indicates an understanding that a relationship is built with time. This is important because professional growth and collaboration occur as the relationship progresses into a trusted partnership (Jurasaitė-Harbinson & Rex, 2010). The mentee’s agreement to continue the relationship is also significant because it indicates her desire to remain in a mentoring partnership.

Other mentees felt that off-site mentoring made it difficult to fully develop a trusting relationship. A mentor shared her perspective of her mentee’s experience:

It would be a huge advantage to have chosen one of the ECEs [at the mentee’s school] only because as she is thinking about things, she can go right to you and you can reach it at a moment, instead of waiting to email or talk because the mentor isn’t there to know the background of the situation. [My mentee] thinks it would be more beneficial to match mentors and mentees at the same school for that reason.

New Learning. The mentees learned from their mentor. Mentees explained that their mentoring partnerships developed their confidence and fostered professional growth. One wrote:

My mentor made me feel valued and inspired me with her ideas and passion for the job. She has a strong belief in making those connections with the families of her children and I witnessed her interactions with them. I will now make more of an effort to find new and different ways to include our families during the next school year.

Moreover, another mentee shared, “We had a really good relationship because we worked well together and we were always learning from each other.”

Mentor Focus Group

In analyzing the data from the post-study mentor focus group, common themes relating to mentoring and teacher induction arose from the transcripts and researcher observation notes. The following are the common themes for the mentors: role as a mentor, increased confidence, and reciprocal learning.

Role as a Mentor. As the experienced mentors discussed their position and responsibilities as ECEs, they concluded that the role of a mentor is similar to that of an instructional leader. One commented, “I think that you are offering your best practices, sharing your failures with

them too... that it is okay to make mistakes... to celebrate the success also and hopefully to create a bond.”

Forming an understanding of what it means to be a mentor encouraged the mentors to reflect on their own practice and experiences. One mentor concluded that mentoring is an innate characteristic of their identity as educators:

I think we mentor without even knowing it, when we have co-op students, when we have reading buddies come in... we mentor or are mentors to a lot of people we don't even realize. We are a mentor for our kids. Everyone who comes into that room, we are the role model, we are the example.

Increased Confidence. The exposure to professional development improved the mentors' self-confidence and encouraged them to recognize the value of their experience and role as guiding educators. Additionally, mentors recognized themselves as more competent educators, as one stated, “I gained a lot of new ideas and it gave me more confidence as an ECE.”

During the focus group, the mentors shared that their confidence increased because they felt respected as professionals and appreciated having their voices heard. Moreover, mentors felt motivated and self-assured in their abilities after the first workshop. These feelings were expressed during the focus group discussion as mentors explained how they learned to trust their own knowledge and experiences when addressing the needs of their mentees. This was evident when a mentor explained how she gave her mentee the option to think outside of the guidebook:

The checklist was there and my mentee kept focusing on it. “Well, we have to go on the checklist,” she said. And I said, “I understand that but if there is an idea that branches from that, I am open to whatever you want. You just have to let me know.”

The mentor's willingness to veer from the guidebook is evidence of her self-confidence as an ECE and as a mentor.

We also recognized that the mentors had years of experience to share and that this opportunity brought them together to confirm that they are knowledgeable and competent mentors. “I am responsive to people, I care about people, I want to see success for them,” said one. Another mentor added, “I think that ECEs in general, we are typically good at working as teams... it comes second nature to us... We have the experience of the longevity of that.” Throughout the focus group session, it became clear that the professional development sessions and discussions reaffirmed the mentors' value for the profession and raised their self-awareness as educators who contribute to student learning and team collaboration.

Reciprocal Learning. The mentors utilized the mentoring experience to develop their knowledge, skills, and practice through the perspectives of their mentees, the observation of classrooms during jelly days, and the professional development workshops. The professional development model of the mentoring program facilitated an embedded reciprocal learning opportunity. The mentors agreed that the mentoring program was just as much of a learning experience for them as it was for their mentee(s). One mentor explained how her perspective on teaching was revitalized:

[Mentees] gave me enthusiasm to go on and a lot of the ideas we got from different places we visited I went back and wanted to try them just as much as they did. I think a lot of their youthfulness rubbed off on me.

Another mentor added:

It was always very reciprocal the way the learning went. I found that as much as I think I supported and tried to help the ladies I was mentoring, I got back just as much; there was just as much learning for me. It was a wonderful experience both ways, as much as I would talk to them about what they found successful about the day, I was sharing what I found successful as well. It was a great learning experience.

The mentors also recognized the importance of keeping up to date with new practices. One mentor shared that her relationship with her mentee encouraged her to be reflective in her own practice and that mentoring is about “learning and taking in and being honest, and being truthful to yourself, taking in the learning yourself. You know we’ve been doing it for so long, you need some more ideas.”

Discussion

Challenges

Challenges of the study were proximity, time, and low mentee response rate to the post-program questionnaire stemming from budget constraints. Mentees also noted that the mentoring program did not change the existing relationship they shared with their teaching partner or other colleagues.

Mentees were able to request their mentor; however, mentors were not given the option to approve or select. Participants also commented on how the minimal time spent together hindered the growth of the relationship. The majority of the mentors and mentees were able to build the foundation to their relationship; however, full development would require their own personal time outside of the study. Moreover, 8 out of 12 mentees felt that the program did not change their existing relationships with other teachers or ECEs.

Successes

Results showed professional improvement in both participant groups. Mentees developed an appreciation for professional development opportunities, became reflective in their practice and recognized that they are on a continuous learning curve. The mentees also formed partnerships that enhanced their confidence and instructional strategies. The mentoring program proved to be most effective when the mentees were able to meet with their mentors face-to-face during the jelly days and less when communicating through emails and phone calls. Moreover, even the most experienced ECE mentors improved in all aspects of teacher efficacy and developed their practice through the reciprocal learning process. The mentors also experienced increased confidence levels as they recognized the value of their profession and role as educators. Participants indicated an interest in continuing the mentoring program. This is not only a mark

of success but also an indication of its future need. Moreover, despite the dissatisfaction with distance, the mentors recognized the importance of guiding beginning educators.

Conclusion

Since the introduction of NTIP in 2003, Boards of Education across Ontario have adapted the program to meet the needs of participants and to increase instructional strategies that in turn benefit student success and wellbeing (Glassford & Salinitri, 2007). In this study, we applied the mentoring principles of the NTIP to create a mentoring program for newly hired ECEs in the province's Full-Day Early Learning – Kindergarten program and investigated the impact of the program from the perspective of participating mentees and mentors. Results from the focus group and online responses demonstrate that the mentors and mentees shared an eagerness to continue the program and that personalized professional development opportunities foster new and reciprocal relationships, professional learning, and confidence. Although there were challenges with proximity and time, the overall success demonstrated that mentors and mentees share a growing interest in enriching their professional practice and in fully establishing mentor-mentee partnerships.

Mentoring matches continue to be an area of contention (Cox, 2005; Glassford & Salinitri, 2007). Proximity appeared to be a necessary precursor for successful relationship building. Peterson et al. (2010) recommended that the social and emotional needs of the mentor are key to successful mentoring. For some mentors, distance prevented them from meeting sufficiently to develop the social/emotional aspect. Taking these challenges into consideration, we recommend a mentoring program that pairs neighboring or on-site ECE staff and which utilizes an online forum to provide offsite and ongoing mentoring and assistance to mentees. Most strikingly, the supportive mentoring program provided validation for ECEs' place in the FDK classroom and highlighted the value of their role and responsibilities as educators. Peterson et al. (2010) believed, as we believe, that recognizing and responding to early educators as authentic professional learners confirms the importance of their place in the FDK classroom. The type of professional development that is ongoing and tailored to the needs of the learner is the most enriching learning experience for all participants.

References

- Awaya, A., McEwan, H., Heyler, D., Linsky, S., Lum, D., & Wakukawa, P. (2003). Mentoring as a journey. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 19(1), 45-56.
- Best Start Expert Panel. (2007). *Early learning for every child today: A framework for Ontario early childhood settings*. Retrieved from http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/topics/earlychildhood/early_learning_for_every_child_today.pdf
- College of Early Childhood Educators. (2011). *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. Toronto, ON: College of Early Childhood Educators.
- Cox, E. (2005). For better, for worse: the matching process in formal mentoring schemes. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 13(3), 403-414.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Duffy, K. (2003). *Failing students: A qualitative study of factors that influence the decisions regarding the assessment of students' competence to practice*. Caledonian Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre, Glasgow: Caledonian University.
- Gananathan, R. (2011). Implications of full day kindergarten program policy on early childhood pedagogy and practice. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, 5(2), 33-45.
- Glassford, L. A., & Salinitri, G. (2007). Designing a successful New Teacher Induction Program: An assessment of the Ontario experience, 2003-2006. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 60, 1-34.
- Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB). (2013). *The early childhood educator mentor program guidebook*. Windsor, ON: GECDSB.
- Hallam, P. R., Chou, P. N., Hite, J. M., & Hite, S. J. (2012). Two contrasting models for mentoring as they affect retention of beginning teachers. *NASSP Bulletin*, 96(3), 243-278.
- Hobson, A. J., Ashby, P., Malderez, A., & Tomlinson, P. D. (2009). Mentoring beginning teachers: What we know and what we don't. *Teaching and teacher education*, 25(1), 207-216.
- Jurasaitė-Harbinson, E., & Rex, L. (2010). School cultures as contexts for informal teacher learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(2), 267-277.
- Kim, S. (2007). Learning goal orientation, formal mentoring, and leadership competence in HRD: A conceptual model. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 31(3), 181-194.
- Kiriakidis, P. (2011). Why do ECE teachers need to be mentored by ECE administrators? *Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională*, (6), 33-47.
- Kozulin, A. (Ed.). (2003). *Vygotsky's educational theory in cultural context*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Lave, G., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mathur, S. R., Gehrke, R., & Kim, S. H. (2013). Impact of a teacher mentorship program on mentors' and mentees' perceptions of classroom practices and the mentoring experience. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, 38(3), 154-162.
- McCann, T. M. (2011). Mentoring matters: Taking an empathic stance. *English Journal*, 100(3), 102-104.
- McCaughy, N., Cothran, D., Kulinna, P., Martin, J., & Faust, R. (2005). Teachers mentoring teachers: A view over time. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 24(4), 326-343.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2010a). *The full-day early learning – Kindergarten program: Draft version*. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario. Retrieved from https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/kindergarten_english_june3.pdf
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2010b). *The new teacher induction program: Induction elements manual*. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario. Retrieved from https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/pdfs/NTIP-English_Elements-september2010.pdf
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2013). *Building effective mentoring relationships*. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

- Patton, K., Griffin, L. L., Sheehy, D., Henninger, M. L., Arnold, R., Pagnano, K., . . . James, A. (2005). Chapter 2: Navigating the mentoring process in a research-based teacher development project: A situated learning perspective. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 24(4), 302-325.
- Peterson, S. M., Valk, C., Baker, A. C., Brugger, L., & Hightower, D. A. (2010). "We're not 'just' interested in the work": Social and emotional aspects of early educator mentoring relationships. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 18(2), 155-175.
- Phillips, N., & Fragoulis, I. (2010). Exploring the beliefs of primary education teachers regarding the contribution of mentoring in schools. *Review of European Studies*, 2(2), 201-213.
- Roehrig, A. D., Bohn, C. M., Turner, J. E., & Pressley, M. (2008). Mentoring beginning primary teachers for exemplary teaching practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(3), 684-702.
- Sheridan, S. M., Edwards, C. P., Marvin, C. A., & Knoche, L. L. (2009). Professional development in early childhood programs: Process issues and research needs. *Early Education and Development*, 20(3), 377-401.
- Stanulis, R. N., & Floden, R. E. (2009) Intensive mentoring as a way to help beginning teachers develop balanced instruction. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60 (2), 112-122.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17(7), 783-805.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). Interaction between learning and development. In M. Gauvain & M. Cole (Eds.). *Readings on the development of children* (pp. 34-40). New York: Scientific American Books.

Appendices

Appendix A. Pre- and Post-Study Questionnaire: Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moren & Hoy, 2001)

Years of Experience _____
 Gender _____
 Mentee ☐ Mentor ☐

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale¹ (long form)

Teacher Beliefs		How much can you do?								
Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.		Nothing	Very Little	Some Influence	Quite A Bit	A Great Deal				
1.	How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2.	How much can you do to help your students think critically?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
3.	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
4.	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
5.	To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
6.	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
7.	How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students ?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
8.	How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
9.	How much can you do to help your students value learning?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
10.	How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
11.	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
12.	How much can you do to foster student creativity?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
13.	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
14.	How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
15.	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
16.	How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
17.	How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
18.	How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
19.	How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
20.	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
21.	How well can you respond to defiant students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
22.	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
23.	How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
24.	How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)

Appendix B. Jelly Day Request Form

!

MENTOR/MENTEE MEETING RELEASE DAY REQUEST FORM

In consultation with your Mentor, please complete this form. The Mentee is asked to fax, or scan by email, the completed form to Natalie Keirl, HR Officer *at least 5 days prior to the release day*. The mentor/mentee/principals will be notified of approval via email. The absence must go onto TESS using Code 21. In the event there are no occasional ESS staff available to provide supply coverage, the meeting may be rescheduled. Every effort must be given to avoid Mondays and Fridays.

Mentor:	Today's Date:	
Principal of Mentor:	School:	
Mentee:	School:	
Principal of Mentee:		
Proposed Date of Release Time:	Half Day (am or pm)	Full Day

Rationale for Request (please check and provide comments where necessary):

- Play-based/Inquiry-based Learning
- Evidence-based Instructional practices
- Planning
- Assessment & Evaluation
- Observation/Documentation
- Learning Environment
- Use of technology as a tool
- Other

· APPROVED

· NOT APPROVED

!

6!

Appendix C. Meeting Response Form

**Preparation for Meetings/Workshops/Classroom
Observations**

Establishing a Learning Focus:

Reflecting and Action Planning:

*SO WHAT?**Implications for my teaching practice and the
learning of my students?**NOW WHAT?**What are my next steps? Next Day? Next
Week? Next Month? What possible further
supports do I need?*

Appendix D. Mentor Focus Group Questions

1. What does it mean to be an instructional mentor?
2. How has your role as a mentor changed since you began working in this capacity?
3. What/who has played a role in shaping you as a mentor?
4. What are your mentoring strengths? Challenges?
5. How would you define success in a mentoring relationship?
6. What is a typical session with a mentor like for you?
7. Use three adjectives to describe your relationship with the mentee.
8. How has this relationship changed your own practice?
9. What encourages mentees to implement new strategies consistently?
10. How did your relationship evolve over the year?
11. What factors are important in a good mentoring relationship?
12. What factors can have a negative effect upon the mentoring relationship?
13. How important do you feel the mentoring relationship is in relation to mentor effectiveness?

Appendix E. Mentee Online Questionnaire

1. What is your perspective on professional development initiatives?
2. What does a typical session with the mentor look like?
3. How long have you been working with the mentor? How often do you meet?
4. Use three adjectives to describe your relationship with your mentor.
5. Describe the quality of your relationship.
6. How has working with a mentor changed your teaching practice?
7. Have your relationships with other teachers changed since working with your mentor?
8. How did the mentoring relationship evolve over time?
9. What factors are important in a good mentoring relationship?
10. What factors can have a negative effect upon the mentor relationship?
11. How do you see yourself as a teacher?