

**Building Capacity Together:
Growing a Culture of Collaboration through Mentorship**

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION
In
Educational Leadership

Vancouver Island University
NANAIMO, BRITISH COLUMBIA
March 2015

Abstract

This research design has been carefully crafted with current literature around new teachers' experiences, adult learning theory and models for mentorship in mind. The primary objective of this design was to align existing high-quality structures and practices from a school district in B.C. to develop a coherent, research-based framework for mentorship that is both sustainable and supports new or early-career teachers thrive as they transition into the dynamic and complex profession. A research design focused on mentorship is necessary given the current state of induction practices, including mentorship, across our province, which are inconsistent and can lack formalized support and structure for new educators. In fact, a recent Canada-wide survey of new teachers has found that the most significant professional need identified was mentorship (Karsenti & Collin, 2013). These results are not surprising, given that new teachers assume the same responsibilities and workload as their experienced colleagues, with the expectations of performing the role to level of efficiency and effectiveness as a veteran practitioner, with little to no support (Cherubini, L., 2007; Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Kutsyuruba et al., 2013, Servage & Beck, 2013).

Research has illustrated that these first years of teaching have a significant long-term impact in relation to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and career length (Bartell, 2004). The negative impact of factors such as isolation, on teacher effectiveness during these early days can be mitigated through a support network that promotes collaborative inquiry into teaching and learning, with student achievement at the heart of collegial dialogue. There is extensive research around the benefits of mentorship to teachers, the students, organization and the profession as a whole. The intention of this

design is to act as a catalyst to bring stakeholders to the table and springboard into further visioning and discussions as to what mentorship could look like to align and meet the needs of an individual school district. The ultimate hope is that mentorship grows from an initial program to permeating our professional organization such that mentoring is “owned” by everyone – it becomes a way of being and learning together.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my loving and supportive husband, Ryan. Numerous weekends, evenings and precious holidays were invested in the challenging and rewarding pursuit of a Master's in Education. Thank you for your sense of humour, perspective and understanding. To my future son, I wrote this Master's for the past nine months as I've carried you, watched you grow, and felt your kicks – you have been with me every step of the way. I hope you know how much I love you already; I thank you for keeping me motivated to see this through to the end as your due date, April 18th, 2015 has truly inspired me to achieve this milestone before you make your appearance in the world. My parents (biological and in-laws) are to be commended for their encouragement and collective enthusiasm for higher learning; I aim to make you all proud! Auntie Lynn, thank you for your hospitality, chats and laughs in July – it was amazing to come “home” everyday to your warm smile and delicious food. To my friends, colleagues and classmates, I thank you for lending your ears, minds and hearts. Your check-ins and cheerleading truly mean more than words can express. A special thank you to Andrea who kept me on-track and focused, coaching me from start to finish.

And to my dear colleagues, past and present, at Learning Initiatives, I wholeheartedly dedicate this work to you. Since my first full-time contract, you have been my mentors, providing me with unequivocal support, pushing me to think reflectively, grow as an educator, and dig deep into what matters really matters in teaching and learning. Thank you, Petra, Mary and Janine for leading with passion and integrity, always keeping student learning at the centre of collaborative inquiry. This mentorship design would not have been possible if it wasn't for the high-quality structures and practices that are already been in place in SD61 (thanks to you) – honed through years of your dedication

to professional development that is research-based and responsive to the needs of learners, both teacher and student.

Finally, this work is dedicated to my mentors who have, knowingly or not, impacted me in ways that have shaped the person and professional I am today. Without a doubt, some of the most influential mentors in my life have been educators – high school teachers, music teachers, coaches, teaching partners and of course my mentors during my graduate work through SFU and VIU, Dr. Marlowe Irvine, Michael Mazza, Martha Gerow, Dr. Neil Smith, and Dr. Scott Priestman. Thank you, Scott, for guiding with your insight and questions as well as helping me refine and edit my research design. It takes a village to do a Master's degree! I am grateful to everyone who has helped me in this journey.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose of the Design & Context

The purpose of this design is to develop a formalized approach to mentorship in the Greater Victoria School District (SD 61). My intention for this mentorship project is to welcome and help support early career teachers through learning-focused relationships as they transition into the complex and dynamic teaching profession. This design work is important because SD61 does not have a formalized induction program, including mentorship, for new or early-career teachers beyond an initial district orientation, informal social events for Teachers Teaching on Call (TTOCs) through our local union, the Greater Victoria Teacher's Association (GVTA) and some professional development funding opportunities. While the initiative I am designing is specifically tailored to the needs and context of my school district, the problems that this design responds to are common across the teaching profession; therefore, the general principles and ideas could be extrapolated and applied more widely.

Reflecting on my personal stories and experiences as a TTOC in temporary assignments has influenced my pursuit of creating a model or framework for mentorship in the district where I teach and learn. This design work is "heart work" for me on many levels. As I enter into my sixth year of teaching it is amazing to me that I am still here. In my first five years I have endured two full-scale strikes and seven temporary contracts. These contracts have included everything in middle school from explanatory Art, all subject areas grades 6 to 8, French as Second Language, and learning support. Currently, I am entering into my second year as a District Learning Coach, working with teachers K to 12 facilitating teacher inquiry with job-embedded professional development in areas of literacy and numeracy. It was through participating in these teacher inquiry projects in

my beginning years as a teacher that I realized the power of collaboration yet also recognized the lack of formal mentorship in our district. The common denominator throughout my teaching experiences has been my passion for professional development, collaborating with colleagues, and engaging in action research. The more I have learned about the practical and transformative ways that mentorship can impact teaching and learning in our classrooms (as well as positively influence and shift our professional culture as to how we welcome our newest members), the more I felt compelled to design a formalized mentorship framework that aligns with the structures and practices already present in SD61. For instance, without a doubt, taking part in the Learning Initiatives Teacher Inquiry Projects for three years consecutively build my capacity as an educator; the professional support around being a new teacher, however, was not explicit or formalized which is where this research design comes in.

Research into mentorship, its benefits and importance in relation to induction practices within education are extensive. Thus, the purpose of this design is not to reiterate how mentorship is a “game changer.” Instead my objective has been to “cherry pick” or selectively target the essential elements of successful, sustainable mentorship programs to design a framework that reflects the unique needs of our district. In the future, I am hoping to bring the mentorship framework forward to my district team to engage in critical conversations and add new layers or possibilities as to what mentorship could look like in Victoria; next steps would include bringing the proposal to stakeholders to garner their support and hear their input. Adding their voices and perspectives to the discussion and vision such as our local union (GVTA), Human Resources, senior management, administration, new teachers, school board trustees, etc.,

would be invaluable and necessary next steps towards implementation. As Kaser and Halbert (2010) advocate:

We believe our collective educational challenge is to ensure that every opportunity for educators to learn is well designed, of the highest quality, and responsive to the needs of the participants. This is important work that must be shared among teachers, union leaders, principals, district staff, professional development educators, and university faculties. (p. 58)

If we are to move forward with mentorship in SD 61, we will need to do it together. But first, here is a proposed blueprint for the work ahead, to help facilitate a vision and realize collaboration as a way of “doing business” by welcoming and integrating our newest members into a dynamic learning community while fostering continuous growth for all teachers. As Lipton and Wellman (2003) state “the ways in which an organization initiates new members is an important aspect of its culture” (preface, p. x).

Justification

This research design is timely due to the current attention, dialogue and research around mentorship in Canada as well as a recent focus across the province of British Columbia. On a local level, the design is warranted in the Greater Victoria School District since there is not a formalized paradigm for mentorship; thus, this design is important for several reasons. First of all, mentorship in our district’s context is necessary due to the nature of obtaining a continuing contract, which can be a lengthy and arduous process including numerous changes in schools, subject areas and grades along the way. My personal and professional experience mentioned previously, is a strong example illustrating the first six to eight years of revolving temporary contracts as

a teacher in English track schools. According to BC Ministry of Education teacher statistics, (2012) SD61 had with 1,286 teachers including 592 teachers with less than 9 years of seniority. This means that almost half of our teachers are likely cycling through temporary contracts, which makes it difficult to hone the craft of teaching (Servage & Beck, 2013). To add to this point, Servage and Beck (2013) suggest that “a teacher’s evolving professional identity gradually manifests itself in more or less effective practices and, ultimately, in the teacher’s effectiveness as a professional” (p. 9).

In addition, we have one of the larger school districts in the province, which can pose an additional obstacle when trying to build a professional support and learning network as often a new teacher rotates through several different schools and grade levels before securing a continuing contract at one school. Given the unpredictability and wait time to obtain full time employment in combination with the fact that new teachers are often awarded more demanding or complex teaching assignments in comparison to their more senior or experienced colleagues (Cherubini, 2007; Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Servage & Beck, 2013), it is of serious concern that there is no official mentorship structure or framework within Victoria’s school district.

Studies often report that up to 50 per cent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Cherubini, 2007; Servage & Beck, 2013). Although attrition rates for SD 61 were unavailable, one can speculate that the instability, inconsistency and isolation of being a Teacher Teaching on Call (TTOC) in or TTOC in numerous temporary contracts in a large district like Victoria for the better part of the first decade of a career, could certainly push numerous teachers out of the profession. Servage and Beck (2013), in their five-year longitudinal study of new teachers in Alberta, identified that important

factors affecting a new teacher's practice were the opportunity to work in the same school for an extended period of time and having a consistent teaching assignment. I have realized that the factors that impact early-career teachers are on a systems level, which were beyond my locus of control, but I did feel that I could design a framework for mentorship that would help foster our new teachers' sense of belonging and support by connecting them with experienced colleagues within our professional community. This is supported by the literature, such that "teachers who feel that they belong in the school community tend to have more self-confidence in their early years of practice" (Servage & Beck, 2012, p. 53); therefore, I believe that mentorship could help retain and promote professional growth of new teachers.

Upon reflecting on my own experiences as a new teacher, it felt that in some respects we "eat our young." Studies have shown that a fixed mindset of "sink or swim" pervades education (Cherubini, 2007; Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Servage & Beck, 2013). Also, it is well documented that beginning teacher receive equally or more difficult teaching assignments in comparison to veteran teachers (Cherubini, 2007; Hellsten, Prytula, Ebanks, & Lai, 2009; Kardos & Johnson 2010; Servage & Beck, 2013). Instead of perpetuating norms and behaviours that isolate our newest members, I hoped to support them as they cultivate their skills and identity, through collaboration and a stance of inquiry. Overall, the goal of this design was to positively influence early career teachers' self-efficacy, confidence and sense of connectedness as they hone the craft of teaching through reciprocal learning relationships with their colleagues. Research shows that beginning teachers who are welcomed and supported by a professional school culture create "a more conducive learning environment for their students" (Cherubini, 2007, p.

4). Our goal as a profession is to impact and increase student achievement; therefore, it seems that one way to help early career teachers make a difference for their students is to work along side them, building a collaborative, collegial culture to help improve professional practice through dialogue, reflection and action.

Another reason why this work is important is due to its timely nature. I was inspired to pursue designing a mentorship project in light of recent provincial initiatives and stories that have emerged through the New Teacher Mentoring Project (NTMP) over the past three years. The NTMP is an initiative funded by the Ministry of Education and supported by the British Columbia Teacher's Federation (BCTF), University of British Columbia (UBC), and the British Columbia School Superintendents Association (BCSSA). The NTMP has supported several districts around the province to implement frameworks that have begun to address the need for mentorship in B.C. (as our province does not have a mandatory induction program such as Ontario). In connection to the NTMP, I attended the *UBC Summer Institute on Mentoring: Mentors as Learners and Leaders* in July of 2014 in my role as a District Learning Coach with my two other district team members. This conference reaffirmed the need for mentorship in Victoria as we learned about the amazing work that is unfolding throughout school districts in B.C. A recent study by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (2012) revealed that 29 of the 60 school districts in the province have a mentoring program. The fact that Victoria does not have a mentorship program yet is within one of the top ten largest districts our province shows a need for further exploration, especially given current provincial attention and development around mentorship. Furthermore, the B.C. Education Plan (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2012a) has identified strategies for education in

our province which includes a statement outlining the belief that “mentoring is key to supporting teacher’s professional learning, both their formative years and throughout their career. Teachers will have increased access to learning opportunity by working with teacher mentors and each other” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2012a, p. 6). The Ministry’s belief aligns with the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation’s resources that support the ongoing professional development of new teachers. This specifically encourages new teachers to develop their own network of mentors by seeking out knowledge and expertise of experienced teachers if there is no formal structure in the school district (British Columbia Teachers’ Federation, 2010).

As the Victoria Learning Initiatives team looked forward to the 2014/2015 year, we had hoped to bring formalized mentorship to fruition in SD61; however, due to a full-scale strike in B.C., our ability to make our vision a reality was stifled due to the limitations and restrictions of our political climate. That being said, this work could be used for a later implementation date; therefore, for the purposes of this design, I will not be reporting out on the evaluation of the framework but focusing on the research to inform and shape what this could look like in SD 61.

A third reason to justify this design research relates to the loss of the School Learning Mentors role in our district due to budget cuts for 2013/2014. For the past eleven years, the School Learning Mentor position (0.1 FTE – the equivalent of one half day per week) was supported and funded in every elementary and middle school across the district. Teachers in this role were released to collaborate with teachers in their school around what’s new in teaching and learning in the areas of literacy and numeracy, assessment, resources and technology. Our Learning Initiatives team facilitated

professional development throughout the year for School Learning Mentors such as guiding teachers in this role to articulate inquiry questions for the work in their schools, providing on-going support, time to reflect on their work, problem solve and celebrate successes. Despite budget cuts, I am hopeful that this research design could help reimagine what mentorship could look like in Greater Victoria so that we can purposefully and meaningfully support beginning teachers as they navigate the trying and turbulent waters of public education in B.C.

Definition of Terms

Mentee for this research design has been defined as a teacher who is in the early stages of their career (under five years) or over five years of experience but new to a subject/content area.

Mentor has been defined as an experienced teacher who has self-selected to work alongside a mentee based on their interests to support an early-career teacher through a mentorship framework and a stance of inquiry.

Mentorship framework/structure/paradigm/initiative will be defined as a “concrete, manageable roadmap” (Zachary, 2005, p. xxiii) with essential elements as guideposts that must be in place to establish and facilitate ongoing, learning-focused mentor-mentee relationships to create an appropriate and sustainable approach to mentorship over time.

I will define *mentoring* as a “reciprocal and collaborative learning relationship between two (or more) individuals” (Zachary, 2005, p. 3) as the mentee works through a process of inquiry into teaching and learning to implement evidence-based, high quality practices (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Furthermore, mentoring can be understood as:

Creating an enduring and meaningful relationship with another person, with the focus on the quality of that relationship including factors such as mutual respect, willingness to learn from each other, or the use of interpersonal skills. Mentoring is distinguishable from other retention activities because of the emphasis on learning in general and mutual learning in particular. (Salinitri, 2005, p. 858)

Mentorship in this paradigm can also be thought of as “building relationships whereby experienced colleagues provided dedicated time to guide, support, give feedback and facilitate evidence-informed learning conversations with colleagues new to the profession or to an assignment” (Davies, 2014, p. 15).

Mentorship is not synonymous with induction; *induction* is an overarching socialization process in relation to “how a teaching community acculturates its new teachers” (Hellsten et al., 2009, p. 705). Wong’s (2004) definition is also drawn on for this design “Induction is a system wide, coherent, comprehensive training and support process that continues for two to three years then seamlessly becomes a part of the lifelong professional development program of a district” (p. 42). Mentorship is therefore a component of induction. For the purposes of this research design, I will be focusing in on developing a mentorship model that would be a part of a larger, system-wide support process for new teachers.

Teacher inquiry is defined as a series of phases as teacher cycles through, sometimes iteratively, as he/she investigates and critically reflects on his/her practice. For this design, I have drawn on Kaser and Halbert’s (2014) *Spirals of Inquiry* as a framework for teacher inquiry through the process of action research (e.g., collecting data/evidence from a variety of sources to inform decision making around planning, instruction and

assessment). The spiral model includes the following key stages: scanning, focusing, developing a hunch, engaging in new professional learning, taking new professional action, checking to see if a difference has been made, and then planning next steps (Kaser & Halbert, 2014). Throughout inquiry, teachers are engaging in ongoing reflection with three critical questions: “What is going on for our learners? How do we know? Why does this matter?” (Kaser & Halbert, 2014, p. 211) Finally, Kaser and Halbert (2014) explain that:

The first two questions constantly prompt educators to check that learners are at the heart of what they do and that educators are basing their decisions on thoughtful evidence from direct observations. The third question helps to ground teams in the importance of the inquiries they are pursuing. Persisting as teams with inquiry minded practices transforms outcomes for learners. Always coming back to the experiences of the learners being served maintains the focus where it must be — on the learners. (p. 212)

Overview

For this design, I drew on several process and resources to develop a mentorship framework. The three main sources for developing the framework were *Creating a mentoring culture: The organization’s guide* by Lois Zachary, Bruce Wellman and Laura Lipton’s *Mentoring matters: A practical guide to learning-focused relationships* as well as our New Teacher Mentorship Project, *Guidelines for developing mentorship in your district/local* prepared by Alison Davies, our co-ordinator for mentorship in B.C.

The following steps were utilized to design a mentorship initiative for SD61 (adapted from Davies, 2014, p. 4):

1. Clarify beliefs and conceptions of mentorship
2. Define the purpose and model of mentorship
3. Describe roles and expectations for teacher participants
4. Plan for:
 - a. communication and assignment of learning teams
 - b. on-going support of mentors and mentees
 - c. program evaluation, growth, and advocacy

The intended audience for this research design is the local union (Greater Victoria Teachers' Association), district personnel, administrators and more generally, anyone who is interested in supporting the professional growth of teacher through mentoring relationships and processes. Chapter One has illustrated the need and justification for mentorship. In Chapter Two pertinent literature around new teacher experiences, adult learning theory and models for mentorship is explored. This leads into Chapter Three, "the bridge," where I justify and explain the assumptions and beliefs that mentorship initiative is based upon. Chapter Four is the mentorship design, which includes outlines for initial planning stages and recruitment for the initiative, planning for/facilitating mentor training and whole group sessions with mentors and mentees. Finally, Chapter Five summarizes the design work, while also unpacking areas for further development, limitations of the design, suggestions and potential challenges to implementation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction: Early Career Teacher Experiences

Teacher quality and abilities are “the most significant school-based factors contributing to student achievement and educational improvement” (Kutsyruba, Godden, & Tregunna, 2013, p. 5). Consequently, there is an increasing body of Canadian and international research around support, professional development and retention of early career teachers. Despite this recent attention, many beginning teachers’ initial enthusiasm is quickly replaced by discouragement and disillusionment, (Hellsten, Prytula, Ebanks, & Lai, 2009; The New Teacher Project (TNTP), 2012). Although rates vary across provinces and individual school districts, overall approximately thirty to fifty percent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Canadian Teachers’ Federation, 2004; Servage & Beck, 2013; TNTP, 2012). Furthermore, according to a recent study by The New Teacher Project (2012), half of all teachers who have been identified as in the top 20 percent of effectiveness leave within these first five years. This is not surprising given that many beginning teachers report a lack of mentorship and “an inability to cope, and describe feeling isolated...frustrated, anxious, demoralized, and overwhelmed by the demands of the profession” (Hellsten et al., 2009, p. 703). It is often the expectation that beginning teachers take on the same teaching load, responsibilities and perform to the same standard of “expertise, efficiency, and efficacy as experienced teachers” (Hellsten et al., 2009, p. 703). In some cases, new teachers are given the most complex and difficult teaching assignments (Danielson, 2002). This raises the question: What can one learn from the literature around early career teacher experiences to respond and shape support for the newest members of the teaching profession? Whether one believes that teachers are born or teacher are made, the research is clear that the norms

and culture around new teacher induction has the power and potential to influence teacher practice and behaviour – for better, worse or status quo (Glassford & Salinitri, 2006; Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Servage & Beck, 2013).

Research has illustrated that these first years of teaching have a significant long-term impact in relation to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and career length (Bartell, 2004). Career cycle theory acknowledges the complexity of various factors at play in terms of influencing new teacher's early career experiences, such as the culture of the teaching profession, professional priorities of the individual, relationships, community in which the school is situated, etc. (Hellsten et al., 2009). Some reasons why teachers leave the profession in the first five years of the career include the “egg-crate structure of schools” (Kutsyuruba et al., 2013), isolation, disconnect or gap between theory and practice (Servage & Beck, 2013), insufficient resources and support, lack of time for collaboration with colleagues, complex work assignments (in some cases in combination with extracurricular commitments and demands such as coaching), unclear expectations (Hellsten et al., 2009), lack of feedback/observations of teaching practice from administration and/or colleagues, intergenerational gaps, dealing with stress, lack of information about school/district policies and procedures, and institutional practices that perpetuate the “sink or swim” culture within the profession (Cherubini, L., 2007; Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Kutsyuruba et al., 2013, Servage & Beck, 2013). Despite the fact that attrition is natural and healthy to a certain degree, the rate at which new teachers leave is cause for concern as it is costly to districts and negatively impacts student learning (Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Teoh & Coggins, 2013).

Mentorship as a Response to New Teachers' Experiences.

While new teacher induction focuses on the overall socialization process into the profession (Rippon & Martin, 2006), mentoring can be specifically defined as a more experienced teacher working in collaboration with a new or early-career teacher with an “emphasis on learning in general and mutual learning in particular (Salinitri, 2005, p 858). For the mentee, mentorship bridges the transition from pre-service to in-service teaching (Hellsten et al., 2009). The literature shows that formalized mentoring can positively influence beginning teacher classroom instruction, student achievement, efficacy, increase job satisfaction, commitment to the profession thereby influencing increase retention of highly qualified beginning teachers (Cherubini, L., 2007; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Kutsyuruba et al., 2013; Servage & Beck, 2013).

In addition to the positive impact on early-career teachers, there are also multiple benefits to mentors (Daloz, 2012) such as professional growth (Mallon, 2004; Zachary, 2005) through reflection into one's own practice (Mallon, 2004). Furthermore, Margolis (2008) highlights that mentoring “can re-infuse a sense of purpose in these teaches' work, and remind them of how and why they teach as they articulate pedagogical reasoning to a new teacher. They might learn via the new teacher bringing fresh ideas into the classroom” (p. 164). Further to that point, mentors may experience increased personal satisfaction as he/she contributes to the profession and the next generation of educators (Wong & Prekumar, 2007). Through the mentoring relationship and process both the mentor and mentee engage in psychosocial development such as higher self-confidence

along with enhanced capacity for communication and reflective thinking (Servage & Beck, 2012).

Mentorship builds teachers' capacity for adaptive change, facilitates new learning and create resiliency in the dynamic profession of education; it is an essential component of the overall induction process because it fosters the development of early career teachers alongside collaborative colleagues (Cherubini, L., 2007; Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Servage & Beck, 2013; Kutsyuruba et al., 2013; Wong & Prekumar, 2007).

Developing a mentorship program within an organization helps create a systematic support system to help teachers accelerate success and effectiveness with students while developing relationships that help change an "internally competitive culture" to one of trust and collaboration (Zachary, 2005, p. 13). Additionally, Zachary (2005) claims "because mentoring combines the impact of learning with the compelling need for human connection, it leaves individuals better able to deepen their personal capacity and maintain organizational vitality in the face of continuous challenge and change" (preface, p. xxi). In fact, in an evaluation of the New Teacher Induction Program in Ontario, Kane (2010) found that new teachers identified mentoring as the most influential aspect of induction in both their overall experience as a new teacher and impact on professional practice.

The literature suggests that mentorship can be a powerful way to catalyze and promote effective teaching practices if the following conditions and considerations are carefully crafted and woven into a mentorship structure/program: appropriate mentor-mentee matches, willingness and commitment of the mentor, mentor training and professional development, co-learning through an environment that nurtures reflection

and collaboration (Cherubini, L., 2007; Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Servage & Beck, 2013; Kutsyuruba et al., 2013). In addition, according to Olebe (2005) essential elements of a mentorship framework includes: program vision; support from senior administration; a mentoring process; responsiveness to the background of teachers; respect for teachers' eclectic perspective and understanding of what it means to teach; consideration of new teachers' varied needs; connections to the professional standards through critical reflection; and teacher learning occurs through the lived experiences within the classroom. Furthermore, English (1999) suggests that there are two layers to mentorship "preparing mentors and mentees for mentorships, and providing continuing professional education opportunities while they are serving as mentors and mentees" (p. 195). Along with these two formal professional layers, English (1999) also highlights the importance of the informal aspects, such as emotional support, that contribute to the spirit of the mentoring relationship. The next section will further explore sound principles and practices of mentorship in relation to adult learning theory as the literature recommends that this will help build a foundation for a sustainable and successful structure to facilitate deep, meaningful learning for teachers engaged in the work.

Adult Learning Theory

Grounding the design of a mentorship structure in adult learning theory honours the presumed differences between adult versus school-aged learners. Drawing on theory to inform mentorship design through an adult education lens "enhances the value of the educational experience" of both mentors and mentees "by making it response to adult learning needs and by communicating the important of continuous learning" (English, 1999, p. 195). In addition, according to Zachary (2005) applying adult learning theory

has a “multiplier effect, resulting in the budding, building, and boosting of relationships” within an organization (p. 23). This is especially important since successful mentorship starts by building a foundation of relational trust (Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Zachary, 2005). English (1999) warns that often educators who design mentorship often overlook or lack an awareness of adult learning principles. As such, mentorship is often pulled together without an understanding of what would make it most effective in terms of preparation and continuing professional development of mentor and mentees (English, 1999). Thus, adult learning theory is significant to this research design in terms of influencing and informing the planning, implementation and evaluation of the mentorship design in an attempt to cultivate a climate for reciprocal learning to enrich and improve professional practice for all teachers involved in the initiative.

As adult learning theories have evolved from traditional learning theory, the connections between behaviourism, humanism, cognitivism, social cognitivism and constructivism will be explored in the subsequent sections. Learning through mentoring relationships and processes can be thought of a punch bowl where the mixing of the various learning theories are combined and applied. More specifically, however, Knowles’ andragogical framework for the “art and science of teaching adults” (Knowles, 1973 p. 42) and models of learning rooted in experience will be investigated.

Traditional Learning Theories & Connections to Adult Learning.

Adult learning theory is a relatively new body of knowledge, though debating and analyzing “nature of knowledge and how we know and learn” are topics that their historical roots in philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato and Confucius (Merriam & Bierema, 2013, p. 24). That being said, it was not until the late nineteenth century that

formalized studies and research began to dig deeper into understanding learning from a more “scientific” approach. These early investigations grew into several theories or orientations of learning, which include behaviourist, humanist, cognitivist, social cognitivist, and constructivist. According to Merriam & Bierema (2013), these five perspectives on learning are foundational modern adult learning theory.

Firstly, behaviourism suggests that learning occurs when there is an observable change in behaviour; thus, learning is not related to “internal mental processes or emotional feelings” (Merriam & Bierema, 2013, p. 26). The early work of behaviourists such as Pavlov, Watson and Skinner paved the way for Edward L. Thorndike and his colleagues, who studied learning behaviours specifically in the areas such as intelligence testing and transfer of learning. Thorndike is recognized as the first to systematically investigate adult learning (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Publishing his pioneering book on this topic in 1928, *Adult Learning*, Thorndike’s research explored whether there was a connection between aging and a decline in the ability to learn (Thorndike, Bregman, Tilton, & Woodyard, 1928). The findings were cutting-edge for this time period, suggesting “teachers of adults of age twenty-five to forty-five should expect them to learn at nearly the same rate and in nearly the same manner as they would have learned the same thing at twenty” (p. 178-179). These findings are relevant for adult educators as it shows that learning is truly a lifelong endeavour.

Today, examples of adult educators applying behaviourist theory into practice can be found throughout continuing professional education (Das, Malick, & Khan, 2008). For example, behavioural objectives are used to shape specific learning outcomes. This is related to “evidence-based practice” where “quantifiable, systematic, and observable

outcomes are used as markers of learning and in turn used to structure learning activities” (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Also, behaviourist principles and practices are often infused into the instructional design and sequencing of learning activities of adults. For instance, utilizing feedback, reinforcement of behaviour, and learning objectives are all examples of behaviourist principles and practices at work (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Thus, behaviourism and its applications are noteworthy when considering designing and implementing mentorship program if one believes that learning can be thought of an observable change in behaviour. On the other hand, behaviourism is not without its critics or flaws. A critique of this orientation is the oversimplification of learning by favouring visible skills and behaviours, which disregards the complexity of the individual learner and the interplay of other factors such as emotion and its influence on the learning process.

Another theory of learning is humanism. The assumption underlying this theory is that people are autonomous in their choices and behaviours with the potential for growth and development. Early contributors to this theory include Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers whose research focused on the development of the whole person through affective, social and intellectual domains (Merriam & Bierema, 2013), which starkly contrasts with the aforementioned theory of behaviourism.

Next, cognitivism is a traditional learning theory that suggests learning is a mental process, occurring in the head of the learner. Theory and research in this area focuses primarily on insight, information processing, problem solving, memory and the brain (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Significant connections can be made between cognitivism and adult learning are in areas of cognitive development such as the work of Jean Piaget,

memory and instructional design theory (e.g. Bloom's Taxonomy). Examples of adult educators putting this theory into practice can be seen when the brain and how our senses process information are considered in instructional design or learning activities that carefully build from concrete towards complex, abstract performance tasks (Merriam & Bierema, 2013).

Social cognitive theory is based on the premise that learning is a mental process that occurs within a social context. Albert Bandura is a chief contributor to this theory. He drew on behaviourist and cognitivist approaches, positing that learning occurs in a dynamic, reciprocal exchange between the learner and his/her environment (Bandura, 1986). Significant connections between adult learning theory and traditional social cognitive theory can be found in mentoring. For example, mentoring is a process through which adults learn through observations and models; thereby drawing on the assumption that learning doesn't just occur through a thinking or cognitive process, it also involves a social environment where people develop knowledge, skills, strategies, beliefs and attitudes through observations and modelling by their peers (Merriam & Bierema, 2013).

An additional theoretical framework connecting life experience and learning is known as constructivism. This theory can be thought of as a collection of perspectives but with a primary focus on learning as creating and consolidating meaning from experience. Well-known thinkers and contributors within this school of thought are Dewey and Vygotsky. Dewey (1963) suggested that authentic learning occurs between the learner and his/her environment whereas Vygotsky (1978) theorized that it is through sociocultural contexts that individuals construct meaning. Constructivism is fundamental in terms of understanding adult learning theory because learning is often situated in the

context of the workplace, which has its own unique set of tools and symbols within a social milieu (Merriam & Bierema, 2013).

Learning in the workplace occurs through “the social construction of knowledge” (Merriam & Bierema, 2013, p. 37) and is at the heart of “self-directed learning, transformational learning, experiential learning, reflective practice, situated cognition, and communities of practice” (Merriam & Bierema, 2013, p. 37). Job-embedded learning fosters opportunities for “cognitive apprenticeships” where learners are supported through explicit modelling of thinking processes in an attempt to make thinking visible to all learners while also inviting participants to share their insights, connections, ideas, questions, etc. (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Learning from one another in a group setting is known as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), which is foundational to learning within a school-based setting and mentorship. Although connecting what a learner already knows to new experiences within a social context is the essence of constructivism (and has many relevant applications when working with learners of all ages), making meaning through the lens of an individual learner’s experience is considered “the resource of highest value in adult education” (Lindeman, 1961, p 6).

An Emerging Theory of Adult Learning: Andragogy.

Adult learning framed by andragogy has strong ties to humanism, social learning and constructivism. Andragogy, the craft of teaching adults, is based on the assumptions that adult learners in comparison to children are more self-directed, independent, internally motivated and use experience as a repository for learning (Knowles, 1980). Lindeman (1926), one of Thorndike’s contemporaries in the field of social philosophy, proposed that adult learning must be built around the needs and interests of the adult and

embedded in the learner's situation, drawing on the individual's prior experiences as a repository for learning. Ultimately, the learner makes meaning through engagement and reflection on these experiences (Dewey, 1938).

Knowles (1984) identified that between the years 1930-1970 there was a general agreement within the community of adult educators that adult learners differ from children, yet a holistic theory distinguishing these differences was lacking. Two notable studies that were pivotal in developing research on this topic were Houle's work *The Inquiring Mind* (1961), which investigated adults and different sources of motivation for learning; the other study was by Tough (1971). Tough's research, *The Adult's Learning Theory* (1971), is seen as the landmark study, initiating inquiry into the topic or concept of self-directed learning, an area of research still alive and well today (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Malcolm Knowles, however, formalized and thereby helped elevate the status of adult education through his introduction of the term andragogy, illuminating differences between adult and child learners. *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy* (1980) is considered a seminal work in the field of adult education; Knowles is considered to be one of the most significant contributors to adult learning theory (English, 1999). His andragogical framework is widely used in adult education and is based on the following six assumptions:

- Before engaging in learning, adults need to know the purpose and reason to learn something
- Generally, adults are internally rather than externally motivated
- An individual's maturity leads him/her to become increasingly self-directed and in control of his/her life

- Life experience is a rich resource for learning
- Adults demonstrate an increase in readiness to learn when there is a specific “need to know” e.g. learning tasks/activities are directly linked to his/her role as a professional
- There is a need for immediate versus future application of learning; therefore, adult learning tends to be problem-based (Zachary, 2005).

Zachary (2005) and English (1999) strongly support the use of andragogy to inform and shape mentorship in all facets of its design. “These six widely held assumptions have significant implications for how individuals are educated for mentorship and provided with CPE [Continuing Professional Education] while mentoring. Each assumption influences the content, process, and evaluation of learning in mentorship.” (p. 196). It is important to recognize when applying Knowles’ framework, that it is the facilitator who creates the climate for optimal learning (Knowles, 1980). This means that the facilitator is responsible for setting the tone by establishing norms, protocols, etc. for behaviour and interaction as well as ensuring that adult learners are involved from the outset to shape the overall experience and evaluation of their learning journey (English, 1999; Zachary, 2005). In general, intentional use of adult learning theory by educational leaders of mentorship can enrich the professional learning for practitioners of various levels of experience (English, 1999).

Knowles (1984) cautions that adults present a special paradox or contradiction for facilitators – that is, adults have developed a self-concept as independent and self-directed yet in educational contexts or scenarios adults may also simultaneously demand to be “taught.” Thus, the conundrum is that adults may revert to their prior experiences as

a student, expecting direct instruction, yet resentment can build if the instructor does not give choice or allow for adults to include their voice in the decision making processes (Knowles, 1984). Additionally, Knowles, Holton & Swanson (2011) advise facilitators of adult learning that “in any situation in which participants’ experience are ignored or devalued, adults perceive this as not only rejecting their experience, but rejecting them as persons” (p. 65). Hence, a practitioner in the field of adult education must be mindful to create a culture of mutual respect, build relational trust and a collaborative atmosphere, including adult learners in curating the content/curriculum with opportunities for self-directed learning (Cherubini, 2007; Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Merriam & Bierema, 2013; Servage & Black). For example, English (1999) suggests that planners of mentorship can “embody respect for adult learners” (p. 196) by conducting a needs assessment with mentors and mentees to gauge personalized and whole group needs and interest as well as seeking participant input to shape the program. Also keeping in line with Knowles’ principles for adult learning, it is imperative that the mentee is not viewed from a deficit model and therefore in need of receiving wisdom and knowledge from the mentor (English, 1999).

Andragogy assumes that adults seek a problem-based approach with immediate application of knowledge and learning versus learning for “potential” future use, which can be seen in some traditional school-aged classrooms; thus, action research or teacher inquiry are both a good fit in terms of structuring and sequencing learning for adult (Knowles et al., 2011). Also, from the outset, the facilitator’s task is to create a “need to know” such that:

an intellectual case is made for the value of learning in improving the effectiveness of the learners' performance...potent tools for raising the level of awareness of the need to know are real or simulated experiences in which the learners discover for themselves the gaps between where they are now and where they want to be...job rotation, exposure to role models, and diagnostic performance assessments are examples of such tools. (p. 63)

Moreover, it is suggested that mentors and mentees could explore possible scenarios together, such as conflict, and role-play problem solving or brainstorm a variety of solutions (English, 1999). Finally, as much as prior experience can be a catalyst for learning, it can also pose a hindrance or obstacle to new or future learning, especially in the case where previous traumatic events have occurred or he/she does not see a "need" for change.

In summary, andragogy and its applications in adult education have been in North American since mid-twentieth century. Specifically, Knowles' work in andragogy, deeply rooted in humanism, helped establish and articulate what makes adult learners unique while also creating space and a paradigm for investigating adult education within professional and academic landscapes. Today, academic programs in areas of adult education and human resource development continue to draw on andragogy for "planning and implementing programs with adults" (Merriam & Bierema, 2013, p. 56). Conversely, one of the major criticisms of andragogy is the lack of research regarding the assumptions guiding andragogy. Another critique is that it does not acknowledge the complexities of "the sociocultural context of learning" (Merriam & Bierema, 2013, p. 58) and it assumes that adults are more self-directed and independent than children, which is not necessarily

true in all cases. In general, however, applications and adaptations of an andragogical approach are popular amongst educators because the instructors, themselves, can make personal connections to the theoretical underpinnings (Merriam & Bierema, 2013).

In sum, andragogy is revered as a model of learning that is intuitive, valid, and useful in identifying characteristics unique to adult learners. Designing a mentorship framework informed by adult learning theory honours the unique characteristics of adult learners to enable success, growth and vision for participants as they engage in professional development through a community of practice (English, 1999; Merriam & Bierema, 2013; Zachary, 2005). “The strength of an adult education approach to mentor education is that it emphasizes that education does not end with the initial orientation to mentoring. The use of Continuing Professional Education sessions communicates to all participants that the teaching profession involved lifelong learning” (Cohen & Galbraith, 1995 cited in English, 1999, p. 199).

Reflective Practice & Situated Cognition.

Models of experiential learning can be explored through two key lenses: reflective practice and situated cognition. Foundational to work in this area are Dewey, Lindeman and Kolb. For instance, Dewey (1938) suggested that reflection helps us problem solve when our routine behaviours or habits fall short; reflection is a pertinent part of learning and growing professional practice. In the situated cognition model, instead of reflecting on practice, one is learning in practice – that is, it is the context that provides the catalyst for learning.

Donald Schön’s writings in the domain of reflective practice are very popular in the field of education. Schön’s work, *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983), advocates that

it is in practicing the craft of teaching and reflecting on these experiences when “really useful learning occurs” (Merriam & Bierema, 2013, p. 115). For example, technical knowledge is therefore applied to the “messy” world of teaching, as early-career teachers transition into the profession. There are two key tenants of reflective practice: reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Schön (1987) argues that reflection-in-action and being able to adjust or adapt on the fly differentiates a novice from an experienced practitioner.

Reflection is also very useful when examining one’s own evolving practice, especially in helping identify disconnects between what a teacher believes and values versus what is done in practice. Stephen Brookfield (1995), a noteworthy author in the field of reflective practice, encourages teachers to seek out critical lenses instead of mirrors when examining thoughts, assumptions, actions, etc. This process can assist in fleshing out discrepancies between espoused theories and reality. Brookfield’s call for critical reflection also connects with Fenwick’s (2004) caution: learning from experience, while instrumental in generating practice-based knowledge beyond “institutional knowledge,” can also perpetuate or reinforce harmful or repressive practices; this is particularly true in education where many educators hone the craft of teaching in isolation. As a result, systematic change is difficult unless professional practice is developed within a larger, complex system (Brookfield, 1995; Fenwick, 2004; Zachary, 2005). A mentorship framework and/or collective teacher inquiry projects that align with other district initiatives are strong examples of networked, work-based learning model that fosters critical reflection within a community of practice; thereby breaking down silos in education and allowing for space to question, unpack, create meaning and

enhance teaching and learning both individually and collaboratively. English (1999) also recommends a “reflective practice model” (p. 198) for mentorship because it instills an approach that catalyzes ongoing professional learning.

Another significant model of learning from experience is known as situated cognition, which honours the context in which the learning takes place. Also known as “contextual learning,” the primary difference between learning from experience (reflective practice) and this stance is that the context shapes the learning (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). In other words, the focus shifts from the individual learning to the environment. For instance, Jean Lave, the designer of this theory, proposes that it through tools such as objects, language and symbols as well as social interactions of a context that learning occurs. Within this model, the learner often engages in a “cognitive apprenticeship,” where the novice works alongside a coach or experienced other to help “scaffold” or move learning forward. This idea was coined the “Zone of Proximal Development” by Lev Vygotsky (1978) as learners are pushed beyond what they already know and can do on their own to new levels of achievement through careful sequencing of tasks and feedback in collaboration with a “master”. This kind of learning also can occur within a community of practice where learners of all levels co-construct knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, norms and so on. This biggest difference in applying situated cognition within a community of practice is the belief that “mastery resides not in the master but in the organization of the community of practice of which the master is a part of” (Lave & Wagner, 1991, p 95). Merriam and Bierema (2013) add “newcomers, through engaging with others in the community, learn what they need to know to move from the periphery to the center of practice; over time newcomers become more engaged

and more active” (p. 121). This quote beautifully exemplifies the power of mentorship, collaboration and inquiry within a larger community, thus moving beyond teaching as a solo act.

Models of Mentorship

Although there are hundreds of published articles in education and business investigating mentorship, there are few established models of mentorship (Hellsten et al, 2009). Bozeman and Feeney (2007) also point out that there is a lack of research on mentorship design and processes, which may contribute to the current gap in understanding of what constitutes an effective model. Instead, research has focused primarily on evaluating the outcomes or results of mentorship programs (Hellsten et al., 2007). That being said, the mentoring process tends to be approached through three predominant lenses: the apprentice, competency, and/or reflective model (Wong & Prekumar, 2007).

In the apprentice model, the mentee observes and learns from the mentor. Many mentorship models utilize the apprenticeship model, yet the draw back or critique of this approach is that the relationship is very top-down or hierarchical in nature, where the “expert” mentor passes on knowledge and skills to the less-experienced mentee (Hellsten et al., 2009). Thus, the apprenticeship model of mentorship does not honour or recognize the early-career teacher’s previous or existing experiences; instead, the mentee is expected to default to the mentor’s knowledge and experience. This encourages replication or conformity to the mentor’s teaching practices while dismissing the development of new approaches to teaching and learning for both the mentor and the mentee (Rippon & Martin, 2006).

Through the competency model, the mentee is given “systematic feedback about performance and progress” (Wong & Prekumar, 2007, p. 1); in this relationship the mentor acts as an instructor or supervisor by observing the new teacher. Finally, in the reflective model, the mentor’s role is to support the development of the mentee as a reflective practitioner. The reflective model is also known as “educational mentorship” (Anderson & Shannon, 1988) whereby mentoring takes on many different roles and functions such as mentoring as “teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counselling, and befriending” (Hellsten et al., 2009, p. 705). Along with the three aforementioned approaches, there are other variations or models for mentorship. Spindler and Biott (2000) suggest an “adaptable view of mentorship” (p. 281) where the relationship between the mentor and mentee evolves over time from “structured support” to “emerging collegueship” (p. 281).

Within mentoring, relationships can be formal, informal or a combination of both. Formal mentoring relationships typically focus on career development whereas informal relations usually occur organically and are predominantly psychosocial in nature such as emotional support, serving to build the mentee’s self-esteem, self efficacy and confidence (Wong & Prekumar, 2007). Humanistic mentoring blends both formal and informal relational aspects to support the development of the whole person (Mullen & Fletcher, 2012). Feiman-Nemser (2001) recommends “educative mentoring” (p. 17) which is a balance between emotional support (e.g. developing a safe and comfortable learning environment) and professional support, based on principles of how adults learn. It’s interesting to note that research into early career teachers’ experiences in mentoring programs revealed that regardless of whether the experience was perceived as positive or

negative, mentees reported that they had gained new learning from the process (Hellsten et al., 2009; Kardos & Johnson, 2010).

The role of the mentor teacher can be conceptualized through a three stage development process, which includes the mentor working as a collaborator, acting as guide or coach providing feedback through observation, and thirdly as a co-enquirer, encouraging critical reflection (Hellsten et al., 2009). Lipton and Wellman (2003) support a similar approach to mentoring where the mentor flexes between roles as collaborator, coach and consultant, depending on the needs of the mentee and context of the situation.

A web of approaches or models for mentorship may best help support the unique and individual needs (Hellsten et al, 2009). Models for mentorship can also be explored through the lens of the structure and primary role of the mentor, impacting the level and type of support and ultimately, the mentoring relationship. The following table (Table 1) illustrates the various mentoring structures, explores the role of the mentor and significant considerations (Strachan, 2012):

Table 1
<i>Types of Mentors</i>
<p>Broker Mentor</p> <p>Mentor Role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation to school logistics, policies, procedures and culture • Brokers involvement of other colleagues as needs surface from early-career <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor has consultant-type relationship with mentee, fewer opportunities for collaboration and coaching • May be just initial support until relationships and connections are formed through mentoring relationships; broker mentor could also, however, provide continuous support throughout the year

<p>One-to-one mentoring; matching</p> <p>Mentor role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matched on an individual basis, usually at the same school • Mentor flexes between consultant, collaborator and coach, in response to the needs of the mentee <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful one-to-one mentoring relationships are reciprocal in nature i.e. both parties learn and grow through the process • Increased satisfaction and “ownership” of the mentoring process when the mentor has volunteered and the mentee has had choice in the mentor
<p>Group Mentoring</p> <p>Mentor role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor works with two or more beginning teachers; this may be in learning teams • Communities of practice provide opportunities for collaboration among all participants <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model provide flexibility for varying numbers of mentors and mentees • This model is embedded into a larger “mentoring culture” e.g. schools steeped in collaboration or district teams
<p>Informal Mentoring</p> <p>Mentor role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff connects informally with a variety of colleagues as needs arise • Mentor/beginning teacher roles are fluid – often referred to a Peer Mentoring, as in many cases the informal mentors are beginning teachers themselves <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spontaneous, informal nature of relationship fosters collaboration • Beginning, early-career or new to district/school teacher may feel isolated or disconnected if no formal relationship or process is offered/presented

Online Mentoring

Mentor role:

- Online conferencing, discussion and sharing with mentees

Considerations:

- All participants have equal opportunity to share with one another; opportunities for connections amongst experienced and other beginning teachers
- Promotes and provides access to multiple resources and perspectives beyond the teachers' individual schools
- Not all early-career teachers may feel comfortable sharing issues, concerns, questions, etc. in a on-line setting; may feel too vulnerable or risky in a public forum

There are naturally benefits and pitfalls to any approach or model of mentorship.

A further consideration with any or all of these structures is the nature of the relationship between the mentor and mentee; for instance whether or not the mentor was assigned or sought out by the mentee. Assigning mentors to beginning teachers may produce a fruitful relationship; that being said, the compatibility between the mentor and mentee is critical in terms of impacting the overall experience for both parties (Hellsten et al., 2009; Kardos & Johnson, 2010). On the other hand, one of the benefits that has surfaced in research around unassigned, organic mentoring relationships is that the mentee searches out and cultivates a personal professional learning network potentially with multiple mentors, which may lead to a “more genuine mentorship relationship” (Hellsten et al., 2009, p. 712). Whether the mentor is assigned or not, the overall quality of the mentorship experience can be higher in formalized mentorship programs due to the fact that there is a structure and curricula, which is lacking in solely informal mentorship situations and leave early-career teachers up to their own devices (Hellsten et al., 2009).

Conclusion

In conclusion, establishing a mentorship model is an essential step in providing beginning teachers with the support and means to thrive in the complex profession. Drawing on literature around new teachers' experiences provides a window into the wide-ranging challenges that our newest members in education face in the early days of teaching. With these challenges in mind, one can draw on adult learning theory and models of mentorship to develop a design to attempt to mitigate these factors by tapping into the power of collaborative inquiry into teaching and learning thereby supporting all teachers along their professional learning journey. Zachary (2005) urges, "Organizations must create readiness, provide opportunities and build-in support so that mentoring can have a profound, deep enduring impact on their people." (p. 2).

Chapter 3: Bridging the Literature and the Design

Teacher induction practices, such as mentorship, matter. They have the potential to positively influence teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and love of the work, which impacts student learning and the profession as a whole (e.g., culture, retention, integration, ongoing growth/professional development, and so forth). Currently, the Greater Victoria School District does not offer a coherent, consistent structure to welcome and support new teachers. Thus, this research design has been carefully constructed in response to the lack of formal mentorship to develop a research-based framework to foster collaborative, learning-focused, growth-oriented relationships among our teachers to support our newest members. The long-term vision of this initiative is to shift our district's culture in terms of how we induct and mentor our early-career colleagues such that mentorship is "owned" by everyone – mentorship isn't seen as a "program" or another thing to do. As Feiman-Nemser (2012) suggests, induction, including high quality mentoring practices, can be utilized as a vehicle for cultural transformation of the organization as whole.

Drawing on the literature around new teachers' experience, mentorship and adult learning theory has illuminated essential elements for a successful mentorship program. As such, the mentorship design in Chapter 4 seeks to reflect these high quality practices through the following beliefs and assumptions:

Learning is at the Core of Mentoring

Teacher and student learning are at the heart of this design. In their book, *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argue that "teaching like a pro means continuously inquiring into and improving

one's own teaching...narrowing achievement gaps, engaging young minds...teachers and teaching will need to keep on improving for everyone, all the time" (p. 22). Hence, an underlying assumption of this mentorship design is that through purposeful and meaningful mentorship, new teachers critically examine their practice through a stance of inquiry, unpacking what is going on for their students and how this can shape planning, instruction, assessment and interactions in the classroom. The following questions from Kaser & Halbert's *Spirals of inquiry: For equity and quality* (2013) are suggested as a framework to help guide inquiry into teaching and learning as teachers use various forms of evidence (e.g. informal and formal) to surface questions and unpack what is going on for their students, as individuals and as a class:

- What is going on for our learners?
 - How do we know?
 - Why does this matter?
- What does our focus need to be?
- What is leading to this situation?
- How and where can we learn more about what to do?
- What will we do differently?
- Have we made enough of a difference?

By using these questions as guideposts with data collection from various sources, new teachers analyze teaching and learning alongside a mentor to reflect on teaching and learning while also informing next steps with their students. Creating the space and time to support mentees to surface their own inquiry question around their practice honours the individual while also providing a touchstone and frame for viewing their work and

wonderings with their mentor as the year unfolds. A “one-size fits all” approach to professional development within a mentorship framework for mentees falls short in terms of acknowledging and addressing individual needs, interests and readiness. Telling a mentee what they “need” as new teacher flies in the face of adult learning theory (English, 1999; Merriam & Bierema, 2013); additionally, it does not honour their autonomy, professionalism, prior experiences and/or individual strengths (Cherubini, 2007).

Overall, engaging in inquiry through learning-focused conversations with student learning at the centre of collegial dialogue is supported by the literature in relation to improving practice. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argue that improving teacher effectiveness will “improve societies and generations to come” (p. xi) and urge teachers to “break down the walls of classroom isolation and convert teaching into a more collaborative and collegial profession—not just because this is professionally supportive, but it also improves student learning and achievement” (pp. xi-xii). Learning is the foundation upon which this design is built. It is focused on teacher-directed, formative professional growth with all teachers taking collective responsibility for student learning.

Formalized Mentorship: An Investment in our Profession

Informal mentorship is great, but it lacks the structure, time and resources to push the learning forward between the mentor-mentee (Servage & Beck, 2013). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) caution that if informal collaboration “is left to itself, it can become loose, unfocused, and inward-looking” (p. 112). This mentorship program was created to align with structures already present through district level initiatives while also developing clear criteria and processes for mentee eligibility and mentor

recruitment/selection as well as a framework for responsive professional development through mentoring relationships. Using an appreciative inquiry lens to frame this work illuminated the fact that SD 61 already has many high quality practices in place such as our teacher inquiry projects. For example, Learning Initiatives, the District-wide professional development department, currently uses teacher inquiry through the process of action research as a framework to deepen pedagogical practice in year-long projects offered to teachers in the areas of literacy and numeracy, K-12.

The Learning Initiatives team also enriches the learning for teachers by providing collaborative planning and teaching time, through Learning Rounds, sometimes referred to as instructional rounds in other districts and/or professions (City, Elmore, Fiarman & Teitel, 2009). Ideally, if funding is available, mentors and mentees are provided with release time throughout the mentorship initiative to have the game-changing opportunity to participate in learning rounds through cycles of co-planning, co-teaching, and debriefing together as this sparks professional dialogue, feedback, reflection and action that improves teacher practice. As Servage and Beck (2013) point out “New teachers want to be recognized as competent and legitimate professionals. As a result, they are afraid to ask for help.” (p. 56). Also, due to the transient nature during the early years of teaching, beginning teachers are less likely to receive formative feedback from colleagues or administrators (Servage & Beck, 2013). Thus, a justification for building observation and feedback into the mentorship framework through the Learning Rounds structure is to promote ongoing feedback and challenge existing practices for both the mentors and mentees.

Another way in which this research design has aligned with current structures and initiatives in SD61 is through a group mentoring approach. The Learning Initiatives department offers teacher inquiry projects where school teams are encouraged to participate as the work and overall experiences of teachers are enhanced through the collaborative teaching and learning. In this mentorship design, instead of matching mentors one-to-one, new teachers and mentors (Teaching and Learning Advocates) are arranged into flexible learning teams. Recent Canadian research around new teachers' experiences and mentorship supports group mentoring (Hellsten et al., 2009). The findings suggest that a group of mentors, instead of one mentor (which is used in approaches to mentorship such as an apprentice model) is preferable as it draws on a professional learning community where the mentee is surrounded by a group of mentors (Hellsten et al., 2009).

A teacher may have an increased opportunity for success and job satisfaction if the teacher's work environment includes "strong professional learning communities" (McNeil, Hood, Kurtz, Thousand, & Nevin, (2006) as cited in Hellsten et al., 2009, p. 703). With this in mind, participants are grouped in to learning teams based on current assignment (elementary, middle, secondary, specialty area, etc.) with a recommended ratio of one mentor to three new teachers. Within these learning teams, there is flexibility for movement throughout the year so that the individual teacher's needs, interests, goals, are met appropriately.

In summary, alignment with the existing structures for professional development is important in terms of creating a culture of mentorship and collaboration (Zachary, 2005). Tapping into these existing structures avoids reinventing the wheel and goes

beyond relying on disconnected and isolated pockets of ad hoc, informal mentorship within individual schools. The assumption here was that establishing a formalized structure would provide the opportunity to enhance and transform the process of mentorship so that it is cohesive, meaningful, purposeful and a good investment (of time/money) for all parties involved. Ongoing feedback from participants will be collected informally and formally (e.g. via surveys) to help shape and inform the content of the sessions as well as report back to the stakeholders as to what is unfolding as a result of the initiative. Visibility of the learning will be critical in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the design, advocacy and planning for future steps as well as securing funding.

Mentorship is Based on Mutuality & Reciprocity

An essential aim of this framework was to create a design that is steeped in the richness of collaborative, reciprocal learning relationships. Traditionally, mentorship has been approached through a cognitive apprenticeship model whereby knowledge is transmitted of from an “all knowing” veteran to the novice, who is a passive receiver of information. This paradigm stifles independence and innovation as mentees default to their mentor’s experience and expertise. Instead, this mentorship design reflects what Zachary (2012) identifies as a process-oriented relationship between the mentor-mentee. The assumption and belief held is that knowledge is acquired and applied through a process of continuous critical reflection, as both the mentor and mentee “travel a parallel journey” (Zachary, 2012, p. 1). Presumably, in this approach, the mentee takes ownership over his/her own learning and development (Zachary, 2005) alongside a skilled mentor who knows when to take on the role of a collaborator, coach or consultant

based on the situation and individual (Lipton & Wellman, 2003). The goal through this approach is that the mentor and mentee will see one another as valuable members of the teaching community, which will allow for problem solving and cross-pollination between generations. Also, through this paradigm, mentorship can occur peer-to-peer while also building all teachers' professional learning networks.

As Wellman and Lipton (2003) warn “the ways in which an organization initiates new members is an important aspect of its culture” (p. x); thus, cultivating a culture of relational trust and collaboration begins with building a strong foundation where people feel safe and supported to share, take risks and engage in critical dialogue/feedback about their personal teaching and learning journey. There is an increased likelihood for this to occur if mentors are simultaneously engaged in learning – there is a sense of mutuality and humility; all parties are striving for ongoing learning, both personally and professionally.

Ongoing Professional Development for Mentors

One question that surfaces for educational leaders and planners of mentorship is: to prepare the mentors together with the mentees or separately? English (1999) suggests that collaborative learning opportunities are important if mentoring is viewed as co-construction of learning, while it is also effective to meet with mentors separately to address their individual learning needs in relation to their role; therefore, professional development exclusively for mentors has been build into the design. This is important because it assumes that the mentor-mentee relationship will hinge on the mentor's ability to embrace the mentees' needs and interests by “offering support, creating challenge, and facilitating a professional vision” (Lipton & Wellman, 2003, p. 1). “Framing a mentoring

identity as one who builds capacity in others is a necessary first step” (Lipton & Wellman, 2003, p. 1).

Educators who have never played the formal role of a mentor “may assume that having subject expertise and experience would be adequate preparation for a mentor” (Wong & Premkumar, 2007, p. 5). That being said, Zachary (2012) argues that mentors who take on the role without preparing themselves often find the mentoring relationship and process disconnected from their expectations, leading to disappointment and dissatisfaction. Accordingly, Zachary (2012) recommends that potential mentors reflect on their motivation and assess readiness before engaging in the process of mentorship as both factors influence the sustainability of the relationship. As mentioned previously the mentorship roles change based on the situation between coach, collaborator, and consultant (Lipton & Wellman, 2003). As such, the mentor seeks to support and nurture the growth of the mentee’s professional capacities through these various roles over the course of the relationship. With this in mind, providing mentors the opportunity to develop these skills through professional development and critical reflection have been carefully integrated and considered in the design.

The Mentoring Relationship Cycles through Four Phases

This mentorship design has been based on the assumption that mentoring cycles through four predictable, sequential and cumulative phases: preparing, negotiating, enabling and closing (Zachary, 2012). An analogy utilizing agriculture illustrates the four proposed phases of the mentoring relationship:

Phase 1: Preparing

This beginning phase can be thought of as tilling the soil before planting.

e.g., mentors and mentees go through various processes to self-assess their motivations, readiness, strengths, and so forth to prepare for the mentoring relationship.

Phase 2: Negotiating

Engaging successfully in this phase is like planting seeds in well-prepared, cultivated soil, increasing the likelihood for fruition within the mentoring process and relationship.

e.g., boundaries and norms of collaboration are established. An inquiry focus, goals and success indicators are articulated and an action-plan is developed.

Phase 3: Enabling

Nurturing growth as the seeds take root is essential during this phase. Enabling growth through the mentoring relationship and process takes the most time in comparison to other phases.

e.g., engaging in the Collaborative Learning Cycle (Lipton & Wellman, 2012) to unpack the question: What is the student data, evidence, observations, etc. telling us? Insights gleaned from these conversations then inform planning, assessment, and instruction. Learning Rounds also occur during the enabling phase (Co-planning, co-teaching, feedback, reflection and adjusting practice) to engage mentors and mentees as collaborative partners in teaching and learning.

Phase 4: Closure

Reaping the harvest occurs during this final segment.

e.g., reflecting on the mentoring relationship and process, both positive and negative aspects, allows for both mentors and mentees to gather the fruits of their labour, harvest learning and move forward into the next season.

Conclusion

In sum, this mentorship design has drawn on current literature and the context of a B.C. district to create a research-based, coherent framework that honours the unique needs of teachers as they develop and grow their capacities as educators while aligning with existing professional learning structures. The assumptions and beliefs around teaching, learning, mentorship and professional culture have guided the planning and

constructions of this design. If this mentorship design goes to implementation it is suggested that these assumptions and beliefs are referred to throughout the initiative and during evaluation to check for congruence and/or provide an opportunity for critical reflection and dialogue. For instance, coordinators and stakeholders may reflect, discuss and make changes where necessary in response to the question: Are these still our guiding assumptions and beliefs? Why or why not?

Chapter 4: The Design

Introduction: Why Formalize Mentorship in Victoria?

The current scenario in the Greater Victoria School District (GVSD) is ripe with opportunity to implement a systematic, formalized mentorship process and structure. Given the fact that the GVSD is among the ten largest districts in the province coupled with the historically trying and turbulent political climate in the teaching profession in British Columbia (British Columbia Teacher Federation, 2010), it is a cause for concern that there is no official, district-wide mentorship framework for new teachers in SD61. In a recent Canadian study, the results confirmed the notorious statistic when referring to new teacher dropout rates – the majority of teachers leave the profession in the first five years, with 50 percent of teachers leaving within the first two years (Karsenti & Collin, 2013). These figures show that professional induction, including mentorship, matters.

Karsenti and Collin (2013) argue that mentorship is the most significant professional need for new teachers today, based on their Canada-wide survey, “Above all, the most often cited need by the respondents concerns an aspect of professional induction: mentoring, which appears to have a positive impact on professional induction and the prevention of attrition” (p. 147). Furthermore, mentorship is needed when considering the anticipated trends of employment for teachers entering the profession in the next 15 years. According to recent projections from the BC Teachers’ Federation researcher, Charlie Naylor (2012), the percentage of teachers with less than five years of experience entering into teaching positions is expected to increase considerably, with a predicted rise in population (birth to nineteen) along with a greater number of retirements expected in the near future. Moreover, this mentorship design is also timely given the

recent provincial focus on mentorship through the joint pilot project between the University of British Columbia, British Columbia School Superintendent Association, and the BC Teachers' Federation, call the "New Teacher Mentoring Project" (NTMP). The NTMP aims to foster collaborative support with districts/locals throughout the province to develop and grow effective mentorship within a quality induction program.

In British Columbia, mentorship policies are decentralized to individual school districts and often implemented at a school-based level at the discretion of the principal (Kutsyuruba et al., 2013). As a result, one of the benefits or "gifts" of decentralization is that each district can develop a model that aligns with its vision, mission, goals, initiatives and overall culture, instead of following a mandated "one-size-fits-all" program. Furthermore, the Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in British Columbia (Ministry of Education, 2015) outlines that educators are expected to contribute or "give back" to the profession, "Educators support, mentor or encourage other educators and those preparing to enter the profession. Educators contribute their expertise to activities offered by their schools, districts, professional organizations, post-secondary institutions or contribute in other ways." (p. 3). In other words, mentorship is not only an amazing way to support and learn from and with one another, it's our job – a standard to be upheld in terms of what it means to be a professional.

To address the current gap in support for early-career teachers or teachers who are new to the GVSD, a mentorship initiative has been designed and will be outlined in sections to follow. One of the goals of this design is to provide a coherent, research-based and sustainable approach to mentorship for early-career teachers as they navigate

their professional lives in SD61. The intention in designing this framework is to guide and support future development and implementation of a district-wide mentorship initiative, as mentoring is an essential component of new teacher or new employee induction. With each topic, I will further flesh out details, expanding on what will be involved at different stages within the framework. The mentorship design has been broken down into the following sections:

- **Framing the “why” and the “what” of this mentorship design:**
 - defining the purpose
 - guiding principles and beliefs
 - goals and benefits
- **Who will be involved?**
 - roles and commitments of participants, stakeholders and facilitators
- **How will the mentorship design and processes unfold?**
 - preliminary steps and invitations to the project;
 - implementation of the design: mentor professional development, whole group sessions and planning for continuous support of participants;
 - evaluation of the initiative.

Framing the Purpose and Goals of the Mentorship Project:

The purpose of this mentorship professional development opportunity is to create space, time and a formalized structure in SD 61 to promote collaborative learning for all teachers, with a focus on supporting early-career teachers’ professional growth alongside

colleagues who will be described as “Teaching and Learning Advocates.” The program framework draws on processes of teacher inquiry and action research. Mentorship in this paradigm is defined as “building relationships whereby experienced colleagues are provided dedicated time to guide, support, give feedback and facilitate evidence-informed learning conversations with colleagues new to the profession or to an assignment” (Davies, 2014, p. 15). Ideally, over time, as teachers cycle through the mentorship process, the positive impact and benefits from the collaborative work around teaching and learning will create a ripple effect into our schools and our district as a whole, shifting teacher practice and school culture. As Brownlie and Schnellert (2009) point out, “One-time workshops are out. Working together over time to understand and support students and their learning is in...for individual schools and school districts to make a difference in student learning, the best approach is to set up ongoing professional development activities in which teachers learn collaboratively” (p. 16).

Goals.

The overarching goals of this mentorship initiative are:

- **Extend and strengthen a professional culture of collegiality, collaboration and learning:** increased teacher capacity for powerful collaboration around teaching and learning; facilitate and build skills and processes for reciprocal mentoring relationships.
- **Ongoing learning for all teachers:** develop an inquiry mindset; reflective and responsive teaching through the process of action research.
- **Fostering a sense of self (professional and personal) as well as a love of the work:** encourage and enable new teachers as they develop professional knowledge, skills, processes; inspire and invigorate experienced teachers as they contribute to the profession and continue their learning journey.
- **Support proficiency and competency in teaching with research-based planning, teaching and assessment practices:** teachers engaged in modeled professional development, job-embedded learning rounds, feedback, reflection and action.
- **Develop collective responsibility for teaching and learning:** teachers develop a sense of collective responsibility for students in our schools, districts and province

as a whole, inquiring into what can be done, on purpose, to support growth in student achievement and core-competencies? (e.g., assessment of growth using BC Performance Standards for Literacy, Numeracy, Personal & Social Responsibility).

Benefits of Implementing a Formalized Mentorship Design.

The benefits and outcomes of implementing a mentorship initiative may include:

- Investment in teachers (ideally, through release time): sanctioned space, time and structures to collaborate, network, reflect and build strong effective pedagogical practices to increase teacher effectiveness and contribute to a rewarding career path for teachers.
- Explicit professional development around pedagogical frameworks for teaching and learning accompanied by learning-focused conversations around student data to promote effective teaching practices that make a difference for student achievement and success.
- Develop a stance of inquiry into teaching and learning: teachers plan instruction and assessment strategies based on documentation of student learning (drawing on multiple sources of formal and informal evidence of student learning).
- Decrease teacher isolation: promote growth, connection and knowledge across silos (generations, departments, grades, schools, etc.) through development of collegiality and collaborative work.
- The mentoring process becomes a support mechanism for all participants through reciprocal learning relationships; therefore, moving beyond “buddy” or informal support via ad hoc relationships (e.g. ‘Here’s my filing cabinet, there’s the photocopier’ types of collaboration).
- Cultural transformation: all teachers, especially new members to the profession, feel part of a community of practice; collective responsibility for teaching and learning; engaged teacher leadership.
- Capacity building for all teachers.
- Close the achievement gap for students: high levels of achievement for all students through differentiated teaching and assessment practices.

Guiding Principles and Beliefs.

Establishing principles and beliefs of mentorship was critical from the beginning stages in developing this initiative. (Note: When implementing the design it is important to revisit and consider the principles and beliefs at each stage to ensure alignment and congruence). The framework and processes of mentorship within this design are founded upon the following principles and beliefs:

- **Inclusive:** any teacher can express interest in participating in this professional development opportunity; all participants are valued, treated with respect and welcomed into the learning community/teams.
- **Voluntary:** Teachers will self-select to participate and engage in the formal mentorship project and processes.
- **Confidential:** Confidentiality will be maintained in relation to information shared between colleagues.
- **Collegial:** The relationship between participants will be collegial, promoting norms of collaborative professional practice.
- **Non-evaluative:** This professional development opportunity is operating on a strengths based approach, with teachers self-identifying areas and goals for professional growth; it is not about “fixing” or evaluating teacher practice; formative feedback will be provided through processes and protocols developed over time between participants.

Principles of Adult Learning Underlying the Mentoring Framework & Processes.

Andragogy is an approach to facilitating the learning of adults (Knowles, 1980). This mentorship initiative draws on Knowles’ perspective on adult learning theory with a focus on mentoring as a process through reciprocal-learning relationships to develop knowledge, skills and reflective practice. The design is based upon the following principles of adult learning as developed by Knowles (1984):

- Adults have a need to be self-directing
- Adults learn best when they are involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own learning.
- Adult learners are motivated by an immediacy of application.
- An individual’s life experiences are primary learning resources.
- Interactions with other individuals enrich the learning process.
- The role of the facilitator is to promote and support conditions necessary for learning to take place.

Thus, based on Knowles’ framework for adult learning theory, three assumptions can be made about mentoring (Wong & Premkumar, 2007):

1. Mentoring can be a powerful growth experience for both the mentor and the mentee.
2. Mentoring is a process of engagement that is most successful when done collaboratively.
3. Mentoring is a reflective process that requires preparation and dedication (p. 4).

Beliefs.

- Mentoring is both a systemic responsibility and a daily practice; high-quality mentorship designs have the potential to transform professional culture.
- The work of teachers is dynamic and complex; therefore professional development needs to be responsive, strategic and carefully crafted to meet the individual and collective needs of participants as they emerge.
- Early-career teachers and new to district educators bring fresh perspectives, new ideas and promote innovation – new teachers can foster rejuvenation within a staff/workplace.
- Welcoming early-career or new teachers into a community of practice helps them kindle a sense of belonging and professional identity while supporting professional growth of all teachers.
- Through mentoring relationships, experienced teachers contribute to the profession, which enables reflection, growth and collaborative capacity.
- Inquiry through the process of action research is at the heart of mentorship and learning-focused conversations. Through collaboration, teachers inquire into teaching and learning to support high levels of success for students.

Who will be Involved in this Mentorship Design?

Ideally, everyone! Mentorship is everyone's responsibility. That being said, this initiative aims to focus on professional development for a target group. This includes early career teachers and teachers as leaders and learners (teachers who have more than five years teaching experience and expertise they would like to share with colleagues).

The follow definitions will be used to describe these two groups:

- **Early career teachers:** with less than five years of experience in a contract that is over 0.5 FTE (Note: the initiative will also accept/support teachers who may be new to a subject/grade level or new to district). Instead of “new teacher,” “beginning teacher,” “mentee,” etc. the participants who self-select for this professional development opportunity will be referred to as **Teacher Researchers (TRs)**.

- **Teachers as Leaders and Learners:** Teachers with over five years experience, who would like to build leadership capacity, an inquiry mindset and skills around facilitating learning-focused conversations. This role will be described as a **Teaching and Learning Advocate (TLAs).**

The following table (Table 2) shows who in the district will be supporting the mentorship initiative along with proposed roles and commitments:

Table 2
<i>Stakeholders Supporting Mentorship: Roles & Commitments</i>
Mentorship Working Group
<p>Collaboration among stakeholders will help establish a vision, mission values and goals around mentorship in SD61. Representation of various stakeholders may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union representative(s) such as the Pro-D chair, TTOC representative, etc. • District Professional Development: Learning Initiatives Administrator or teacher • Principal/Vice Principal (school administration) • District administration • Human Resources • A new teacher and/or mentor • EdTech Co-ordinator <p>This working group will take on general responsibilities for organization, development and implementation of mentorship. Developing a working group will be instrumental in the long-term sustainability, growth of organizational mentoring and overall effectiveness. Visible support and investment from the top of the organization will be key in all members feeling that the work of mentorship is valued. Ultimately, in order for mentorship to be successful in Victoria, it will need to be a joint venture between the SD61 and the Greater Victoria Teachers' Association.</p> <p><i>Note: This Masters' project can serve as starting point as to what mentorship could look like in Victoria. Dialogue to flesh out further details such as stakeholders' vision, mission, values and goals is necessary from the outset to ensure alignment and agreement before the program goes to implementation. Initial meetings may take place early in the year, such as September and October with subsequent check-ins at mid- and end of year to assess, analyze and reflect on the impact of the program and future directions based on documentation such as facilitators' feedback and participant surveys/evaluations.</i></p>

Senior Management & District Administration

Visible support from the top is important to creating and sustaining a culture of collaboration. Senior administration and other key stakeholders (e.g. School Board Trustees, representatives from the local union executive, Principal/Vice Principals) will be invited to introduce themselves and speak to value of collaboration and mentorship at an initial meeting such as the “Meet and Greet Dinner” or a beginning whole-group session. Participation or sitting in on a session would also be an opportunity to connect with teachers and show support.

Local Union: Greater Victoria Teachers’ Association (GVTA)

Ideally, the GVTA is a collaborative partner in the development, implementation and evaluation of the mentorship initiative through the working committee and involved as a resource as the initiative unfolds. Representatives from the Pro-D committee, for example, could be a resource and/or source of support for teachers.

Human Resources (HR)

Human Resources’ role will be to support the Collaboration Inquiry District Facilitators by providing and collating a list of names of teachers who fit project criteria. HR will act an ongoing resource and liaison for facilitators.

Mentorship Co-ordinators (e.g. Learning Initiatives teachers)

The co-ordinators collaborate with the Mentorship Working Group from the outset to ensure that project implementation aligns with stakeholders’ vision, mission, values and goals. They will also work with Human Resources and SD61 administrators to invite teachers who fit project criteria. Responsibilities will include ongoing communication, coordination, development and facilitation of the project in response to the needs, interests and readiness of participants (New Teachers and Teaching and Learning Advocates). Ongoing collection/documentation of the initiative through various sources such as surveys, evaluations, interviews, photographs, video footage, etc. will help guide and shape the project as it unfolds while informing next steps. Accountability for managing, overseeing, and coordinating implementation of the mentorship initiative will be the overall role of the co-ordinators.

Some specific coordinator roles and responsibilities around communication and marketing include:

- Send out flyers and survey potential teacher participants who fit project criteria (i.e. new to teaching (less than five years), new to grade level or subject (new to a

teaching assignment), new to district, etc.).

- Based on background, experience and interests of Teacher Researchers an invitation/call for Teaching and Learning Advocates will be sent out (via Principals, Vice Principals and/or Pro-D Reps at each school, K-12); Teachers who would like to complete an “Expression of Interest” form will be considered for the project based on best fit of the group of TRs (background, experience, interests)
- Reminders for pro-d sessions will be emailed to participants throughout project as necessary
- Update to the stakeholders via the project working group; there is also a possibility for a School Board Presentation and/or presentation at a Principal’s/Vice Principal’s to inform the school board trustees and senior management as well as the formal learning leaders in the district
- Updates and information about the project posted to District and GVTA website (option) & The Advocate (GVTA newsletter)
- Ongoing networking, communication, increased visibility and sharing about the project through the SD61 Twitter hashtag #sd61learn as well as other provincial teacher mentorship hashtags: #bcdmentors #mentoringbc #etmn
- Stay connected with Provincial Mentorship groups/initiatives such as Teacher Mentorship BC <http://teachermentorshipbc.com> (e.g. Coordinator: Anne Hales) and The New Teacher Mentorship Project <http://m2.edcp.educ.ubc.ca/mentoringbc/> (e.g. Coordinator: Anne Davies)

Roles and responsibilities around designing professional development for mentors and mentees are articulated later in this document, specifically in the “How the Mentorship Design will Unfold” section.

Aboriginal Education, Special Education, Educational Services, Languages & Multiculturalism

These district departments and personnel serve as resources and collaborative partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of the mentorship project, playing a supporting role to help reach all of our students in SD61.

School Principals & Vice Principals

Administration can assist the mentorship co-ordinators by collating a list of names of teachers who fit project criteria. Principals and Vice Principals can also encourage development and success of this project by supporting participants through collaborative relationships, communication, and facilitation of mentorship within school. Support may include school resources or release time for collaborative inquiry.

Educational Technology Co-ordinator

Vision and support around how to extend and expand teachers' professional learning networks and integrate technology into the classroom is key in promoting teaching and learning for the 21st century. How technology can support mentorship (relationships, processes, etc.) would also be an essential area for support in this initiative.

The graphic below (Figure 1) summarizes key support personnel for new teachers in SD61 as a part of this mentorship design:



Figure 1. Who is supporting our new teachers through this initiative?

How will the Mentorship Design Unfold? What will be Involved?

The criteria and expectations for teacher participants is part of preliminary planning as it will be included in the invitations to take part in the mentorship initiative.

The design is written for an audience of potential mentorship coordinators. Below, participant project criteria for both new teachers and mentors is outlined:

Participant Project Criteria.

New Teachers.

- Early career teacher (less than five years teaching experience) **or** new to subject/grade level **or** new to district
- 0.5 FTE or higher in a full-year contract (to maximize time and benefit to participants and other team members)
- Commit to district learning team, whole group professional development sessions (ongoing throughout the year; possibility that some meetings/sessions outside of school hours) and job-embedded learning rounds (times and dates to be determined)
- Encouraged to participate for two years; may participate for up to three years in project (mentees can change learning teams if assignments and goals change).
- Express an interest in developing communication and collaborative skills/capacities through learning focused interactions and structured conversations to extend thinking
- Express an interest in ongoing professional learning and growth through collaboration, inquiry and reflection

Mentors: Teaching and Learning Advocates (TLA).

Ideally, the TLA will:

- Have a minimum of five years teaching experience
- Hold a full-time teaching contract
- Be familiar with context of Victoria School District (SD 61) (organizational knowledge such as general policies and procedures)
- Commit to at least one year in the role; optimally TLAs will commit for three years
- Recognize and support the needs of new teachers, teachers new to subject area or grade level and/or new to district; show an interest and understanding of the challenges faced by those who are in their early years of teaching
- Demonstrate commitment and willingness to advocate, promote and support colleagues (within release time and on own time)
- Commit to whole group and mentor professional development sessions (ongoing throughout the year; possibility that some meetings/sessions outside of school hours; and job-embedded learning rounds (times and dates to be determined)
- Have a strong background knowledge in curriculum and pedagogy (instruction and assessment)
- Demonstrate and express an interest in developing communication and collaborative skills/capacities through learning focused interactions and structured conversations to extend thinking
- Demonstrate and express an interest in ongoing professional learning and growth through collaboration, inquiry and reflection

Team-Based Model of Mentorship: Learning Teams.

A team-based model of mentorship is used in this design. This means that new teachers have the opportunity to work collaboratively with more than one mentor and alongside peers/colleagues within a professional learning community. Each group will be referred to as a Learning Team.

The learning teams are formed according to the following guidelines:

- Initial Learning Teams will be based on grade, subject and/or specialization (TLAs help build these learning teams with the mentoring coordinator(s) after the initial meeting e.g. “Meet and Greet” networking/kick-off event);
- TLAs will be partnered in teams that are an appropriate learning fit, i.e. reflect the strengths and self-identified areas for growth of the TLAs and are a good match for the new teachers’ background, experience, goals and interests;
- As the project unfolds there is always the option for teachers to move to teams that meet their emerging needs, interests, area of inquiry focus, etc.;
- Each team will have an appropriate ratio of TLAs to new teachers to provide optimal time and benefit to all participants.

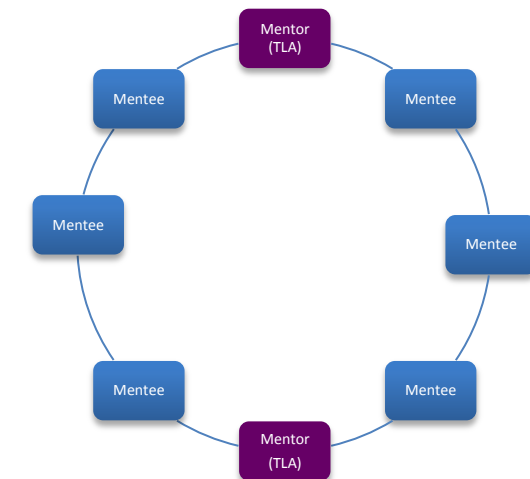


Figure 2. Example of a Learning Team

Mentorship Initiative Time-Line.

The mentoring initiative has been broken down in the following three sections as a guide for planning, implementation and evaluation of the project:

1. **Preliminary Steps:** *What will need to be done to prepare and recruit participants for the mentorship project/initiative?*
2. **Overview of Mentor (TLA) Professional Development:** *Sample timeline and outline of pro-d progression designed specifically for teachers in the role of TLAs*
3. **Learning Team Professional Development:** *Sample timeline and outline of pro-d progression for whole group sessions with TLAs and new teachers (TRs)*

Preliminary Steps.

What will need to be done to prepare and recruit participants for the mentorship project?

The table below (Table 3) shows what will need to be done to prepare for recruitment of teacher participants leading up to the “Meet & Greet Dinner” where the TLAs and New Teachers officially launch the mentorship initiative. It is assumed here that the project co-ordinator(s) oversees, organizes and communicates with various parties throughout this process.

Table 3
<i>Preliminary Planning & Steps</i>
<p><i>By mid/end of September...</i></p> <p>Gather potential new teacher participant names based on criteria (see above) by contacting/emailing Human Resources (HR) & Principals/Vice Principals (P/VPs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources: To collate list of teachers who fit project criteria (e.g. less than five years experience and new to a contract; and/or a new teacher to the district in a contract) <input type="checkbox"/> P/VPs: To collate list of teachers at their school who fit project criteria and are new to grade level/subject area at their school. Alternatively, the flyer could be sent directly to P/VPs and then distributed to teachers accordingly. The downfall here is that teachers are not getting the information directly from the organizers/coordinators of the initiative. <p>Information from HR & PVPs regarding teachers who fit criteria or are interested is passed along via email (by the established deadline) to the program coordinator(s) to create a master list of invitees.</p>
<p><i>By the end of September...</i></p> <p>Send out flyer and needs survey to invite new teachers to the professional development opportunity. The flyer will include an outline of the project learning intentions and commitments. Teachers interested in participating are asked to complete a Background and Needs Survey</p> <p><i>Note: start small e.g., maximum of 30 participants with 6 seats reserved at each level/area: elementary, middle, secondary, special education, exploratory (e.g. art,</i></p>

music, etc.). If limiting number of participants and/or it is not financially feasible to include all interested teachers, operate on a first-come, first-serve basis or lottery.

By early October...

Finalize criteria for mentors (TLAs) based on new teacher participants' background, subject areas and/or grade levels and results from the "Needs Survey"

- Create the "Expression of Interest" invitation for TLAs based on criteria, e.g., specific numbers and background experiences and teaching areas such as elementary, middle, secondary, specialty area, etc. May want to include Mentoring Motivation Checklist from Zachary, 2012, p. 97**

Note: With a team-based model of mentorship, an optimal ratio of TLAs to New Teachers may be 2:6 for each collaborative team, e.g., if there were six learning teams, then 12 TLAs would be ideal

- Project coordinators to distribute invitation/call for TLAs via P/VPs and/or Pro-D Reps at each school who will then pass along the invitation to become a Teaching and Learning Advocate (TLA) to staff members.**
- Teacher's interested in the TLA role respond to the invitation to project coordinator(s) by the deadline indicated; an "Expression of Interest Form" will be required.**

Note: Teachers for the TLA role will be determine based on need and suitability/fit to reflect the needs of the TRs.

By mid October...

Send out flyer to TRs & TLAs confirming registration in the project and outline further details:

- project overview with dates/times
- invite participants to a "Meet and Greet" dinner event where TLAs and New Teachers become familiar with the goals of the mentorship initiative, build relationships/community and network.

By mid to late October...

TLA Professional Development Session (Prior to Meet and Greet)

Purpose: to begin support of teacher-leaders to develop understanding of mentoring as well as the skills and dispositions to help cultivate positive, learning-focused relationships.

This session will touch on:

- clarification of the role
- overview of the mentoring initiative
- norms of collaborative work
- ways to begin building relational trust
- strategies and skills to engage in learning-focused conversations
- teacher inquiry through the process of action research
- planning for ongoing communication and collaboration

For a more detailed description, see the TLA pro-d progression in the Implementation section later in the design.

Following initial mentor training session (mid to late October)...**Meet & Greet Dinner**

Purpose: to bring together the whole group to build relationships and network as well as provide time for initial collaborative learning teams to meet and surface background experiences and hopes for the work together.

This session will include:

- Welcome and community building activity: Who is in the room? What passions do you bring to teaching & learning?
- Overview of project, goals and commitments
- Moving into primary, middle, secondary, special education, specialty area (e.g., Art, Music, etc.) learning teams
- Norms of Collaborative Work
- Time for participants to focus on their experiences in the classroom; strengths they bring to teaching; surface what support might be helpful; goal for the work this year
- Reflection
- TLAs to help build collaborative teams after meeting (option)

Note: Initial learning teams during this dinner will be loosely grouped by cohort or teaching level/specialty area; debriefing after the event will guide the grouping process. Although the learning teams are flexible and fluid to some degree, initial groupings will help with organization and maintaining ideal ratios of TLAs to New Teachers.

Implementation.

Planning for continuous support of participants through mentor (TLA) professional development and whole group mentoring sessions

First of all, taking stock of existing practices within the GVSD is reflected in the mentorship design. Using an appreciative lens to explore current initiatives in SD61, there are already powerful structures in place that support sustained professional development overtime (instead of the “one-off” workshop approach) through teacher inquiry and action research. These structures are utilized by Teacher Inquiry projects facilitated by the Learning Initiatives Department as well as various Teacher Inquiry and Collaboration grants throughout the district.

Ideally, all participants will have the opportunity to strengthen and enrich professional practice through reflection and feedback as well as hone the craft of teaching through side-by-side planning, teaching and debriefing with colleagues. These cycles of co-plan, co-teach, debrief are known as learning rounds. The learning rounds structure is utilized by SD61 as a part of the Learning Initiatives projects.

Professional Development Sessions for TLAs.

As described in Chapter 3, the TLAs will be provided with professional development opportunities as a separate group. Research shows that ongoing professional development and support for mentors is an essential component of a high-quality mentorship design, as it helps develop critical skills for learning-focused engagement with new colleagues. It should be noted here that this section is intended as an outline only with possibilities sketched in to frame what the session might include. In terms of expanding on details and content, it would be best if this were developed in collaboration and in response to the needs, interests, readiness, etc. of the TLAs. It is the intention that the project coordinator(s) facilitates the whole group sessions with the TLAs. That being

said, these sessions could be co-planned and co-facilitated with a provincial mentorship consultant/coordinator (e.g., Anne Davies, co-ordinator of The New Teacher Mentoring Project, Nancy Hinds, BCTF Facilitator).

A well-designed mentorship framework acknowledges and prepares for the “predictable” phases of mentoring (Zachary, 2012, p 87). Development of mentoring relationship and processes will occur through the following four stages proposed by Zachary (2012) – preparing, negotiating, enabling and reaching closure. For more detailed information on the four phases refer to Zachary’s book *The Mentor’s Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships* (2nd ed.) pp. 87-93. Cycling through these four phases, an overview of TLA Professional Development is outlined below (Table 4) with suggested resources/topics to support planning and implementation. Each professional development/training session with TLAs is to occur prior to whole group, learning team meetings:

Table 4
<i>Teaching & Learning Advocate (TLA) Professional Development</i>
<p>Session #1: Preparing Phase: Introduction, Building Community & Purpose</p> <p>Timeline: to occur prior to Meet & Greet e.g. mid October</p> <p>Building a solid foundation for an effective mentoring relationship starts with mentors reflecting on their own personal learning journey, clarifying roles and responsibilities and building strategies for communication and collaboration (Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Zachary, 2012). Brookfield (1986) also advocates that when facilitating adult learning, it is important for learners to become aware of their idiosyncrasies such as personality, learning preferences, etc. Surfacing this self-awareness will help in navigating the mentoring relationship such as when to step forward and when to hold back to foster and support the learning needs, interests and readiness of mentees.</p> <p>In this session, participants will explore and unpack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome – build community & purpose for the work together • Overview, goals & commitments

- Clarification of the role and responsibilities (Lipton & Wellman, 2003, pp. 1-11)
- Establish norms of collaborative work
- Overarching Frameworks of the Initiative:
 - The Mentoring Cycle (Zachary, 2012, pp. 87-89)
 - Teacher inquiry through the process of action research (e.g., Spirals of Inquiry by Halbert & Kaser, 2013; The Collaborative Learning Cycle by Lipton & Wellman, 2012, p. 26)
- For the Preparing Phase, consider processing/reading sections from Zachary, 2012, pp. 95-126 and engaging participants in some of the exercises such as:
 - Exercise 4.4 Mentoring Skills Inventory p. 106
 - Exercise 4.6 Assumption Hunting p. 121
- Learning-focused conversations (Lipton & Wellman, 2003, pp. 21-27)
- Reflection on learning

Recommended resources:

Halbert, J. & Kaser, L. (2013). *Spirals of inquiry for equity and quality*. Vancouver, Canada: BCPVPA Press.

Lipton, L., & Wellman, B. (2003). *Mentoring matters: A practical guide to learning-focused relationships* (2nd ed.). Sherman, CT: Mira Via.

Lipton, L., & Wellman, B. (2012). *Got data? Now what?* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Zachary, L. (2012). *The mentor's guide: Facilitating effective learning relationships* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.

Websites:

Mentoring BC: Bringing Educators Together (The New Teacher Mentorship Project)
<http://m2.edcp.educ.ubc.ca/mentoringbc/>

New Teacher Centre <http://newteachercentre.org/index.php>

Session #2:

Negotiating Phase: Teachers as Leaders and Learners

Timeline: to occur prior to whole group session #1 e.g. end of October

In the negotiating phase, the mentees will surface inquiry questions to find a learning focus for the year using student data (e.g., common diagnostic assessment, formal and informal assessment evidence). The inquiry question will become more refined as the work unfolds. Also during this time, desired learning outcomes/SMART goals will be established through dialogue in learning teams (between the TLAs and new teachers) as well as coming to consensus around confidentiality and boundaries. As such, TLAs will prepare for the negotiating phase through:

- Review of the mentor initiative/project goals & frameworks (e.g. Mentoring Cycle (Zachary, 2012, pp. 87-89) & Teacher Inquiry “The Spiral of Inquiry in Action” (Halbert & Kaser, 2013, pp. 47-59)
- Reveal goals for the session; teachers set individual goals for the day.
- Continue to developing strategies and skills to engage in learning-focused conversations through processing/activities with one or more of the following:
 - “Meditational Mentoring” (Lipton & Wellman, 2003, pp. 27-30)
 - “Structuring Conversations” & “Balancing Support with Challenge” (Lipton & Wellman, 2003 pp. 39-43)
 - “Collaborative Learning Cycle” (Lipton & Wellman, 2013; pp. 25-39)
 - “Negotiating: Establishing Agreements” (Zachary, 2013, pp. 127-154)
- Reflection on personal goal and learning from the session.

Session #3:

Enabling Growth as a Collaborative Colleague: Support, Challenge & Vision + Engaging in Feedback & Overcoming Obstacles

**Timeline: to occur prior to whole group session in the enabling growth phase
Option – this session could be spread between two days**

According to Anderson and Shannon (1988), good mentors are committed to three values. First of all, mentors are willing to make themselves open, explaining tacit knowledge by communicating reasons behind decisions and actions thereby making teaching and learning visible to the mentees. Secondly, mentors expect to work with mentees incrementally and over time. Finally, mentors express care and concern about both the personal and professional welfare of the mentees. Mentors exhibit these values by facilitating mentoring through specific process skills such as asking questions, paraphrasing, summarizing, pausing and providing feedback (Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Zachary, 2000). Furthermore, mentors can draw on past experience and insight to model behaviour and share stories that help inspire and inform; thus, the mentor serves an important role as a collaborative colleague and demonstrating reflective practice.

In this phase of enabling growth, different resources and strategies can be drawn on to develop mentors (and subsequently) mentees as collaborative colleagues and reflective practitioners. It may be useful for the TLAs to experience a variety of protocols to promote professional dialogue within a professional collaborative learning team and deepen individual practice. This phase is “the work” at the core of the mentoring process.

- Review of the mentor initiative/project goals & frameworks guiding the learning
 - Mentoring Cycle (Zachary, 2012, pp. 87-93)
 - Teacher Inquiry (Halbert & Kaser, 2013, pp. 37-46)
- Reveal goals for the session; teachers set individual goals for the day.
- Possible Readings:

- “Support, Challenge & Vision” (Zachary, 2012, pp. 155-176)
 - “Engaging in Feedback and Overcoming Obstacles” (Zachary, 2012, pp. 177-198)
 - “Developing High Performing Groups” (Lipton & Wellman, 2012, pp. 75-93)
 - “Professional Inquiry for Deeper Learning” (Halbert & Kaser, 2013, pp. 60-72)
- Possible exercises to spotlight or unpack further around personal reflection & giving feedback:
 - Review mentor’s key tasks in Facilitating Growth and Development (Zachary, 2012, p. 157)
 - Exercise 6.1 “Facilitating Learning through Support: Self-reflection” (Zachary, 2012, p. 160)
 - “Four Dynamical Tensions: Assessing Your Leadership” (Lipton & Wellman, 2012, p. 89)
 - Tips for Giving Feedback (Zachary, 2012, pp. 180 & 182)
 - Exercise 7.2 Journaling (Zachary, 2012, p. 190)
- Continue to develop specific strategies and skills to engage in learning-focused conversations through processing and engaging with one or more of the following:
 - Learning-Focused Verbal Tools (Lipton & Wellman, 2003, pp. 49-63)
 - Facilitating Professional Vision: From Novice to Expert Teaching (Lipton & Wellman, 2003, p. 65-79)
 - “Group Work Structures” (Lipton & Wellman, 2012, p. 92-93)
- Focus group: surfacing questions, wonderings in relation to roles, responsibilities as a TLA and the work that is unfolding within learning teams
 - Possible exercise for reflection: A Readiness Checklist (Zachary, 2012, p. 195)

Session #4

Celebrating & Closing

Timeline: May/June

Suggestion: To acknowledge and honour the work of the TLAs this final session could take place over dinner, which simultaneously reduces costs, since release time would not be needed.

In this final session, the formal aspect of the mentoring relationship will come to a close for the school year. This time will be used to situate and reflect on the learning through focused conversations, using an appreciative or strengths-based approach. Surfacing what has worked well will allow the program to build on strengths in order to problem-solve, grow and plan for the future. It is also an opportunity to thank the mentors (TLAs) for their commitment and contributions to teaching and learning.

- Appreciative inquiry/lens: reflecting and celebrating the strengths of the work that unfolded over the year
- Possible readings and exercises to spotlight or unpack further:
 - Exercise 8.2 “Self-reflection: Turning Closure into Learning” (Zachary, 2012, p. 212)
 - “Celebrating Learning” (Zachary, 2012, pp. 213-215)
 - Exercise 8.3 “Mentor Self-Reflecting on Learning” (Zachary, 2012, p. 218)
 - Exercise 8.4 “Coming to Closure: A Readiness Checklist” (Zachary, 2012, p. 219)
- Building on these strengths & planning next steps...
- Survey: collect feedback based on goals of the project as well as individual anecdotal comments and reflections

Mentoring Design for TLAs and TRs.

After the initial mentor (TLA) training sessions and the “Meet & Greet”, the TLAs and TRs will begin the mentorship initiative together. Each session will include individual reflection time, collaborative inquiry and planning in learning teams as well as targeted professional development based on the emerging needs of the group. The mentorship series will be facilitated by the project co-ordinators. It is assumed that the coordinators will engage in their own ongoing professional development to stay abreast of current research and resources to support participants.

The table below (Table 5) is an overview of the project – showing the possible learning teams (by grade level and/or specialty area) progressing through whole-group professional development sessions over the course of a year, with opportunities to collaboratively plan and teach together through learning rounds (Figure 3).

Table 5***Teaching & Learning Together Mentorship Initiative Overview***

Learning Teams: Teaching & Learning Advocates (TLAs) & Teacher Researchers (TRs) Possible Groupings:					
Elementary	Middle	Secondary	Specialty – music, exploratory, etc.	Learning Support	Other

5 Whole-group Professional Development Sessions				
Session 1: October	Session 2: Oct/Nov	Session 3: Nov/Dec	Session 4: Feb/March	Session 5: May/June
Preparing Phase: Building Community & Purpose	Negotiating Phase: Finding a Learning Focus	Enabling Growth: Teacher Inquiry & Modelled Pro-D	Enabling Growth: Teacher Inquiry & Modelled Pro-D	Celebrating & Closing

Learning Rounds – job-embedded, side-by-side teaching in teams January & April/May				
Co-plan	Co-Teach	Co-teach	Debrief & Reflect	Adjust & Act

During Learning Rounds, The Learning Teams will break into smaller groups for co-planning and co-teaching.

Decisions around whose class(es) the

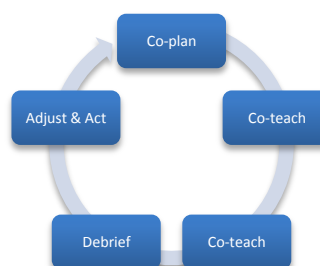


Figure 3. Learning Rounds Structure. This figure illustrates how teachers in learning teams or partnerships move through a collaborative cycle during a learning round.

teaching will take place in will be negotiated and decided to best meet the needs, interests and readiness within individual learning teams. That being said, co-teaching is not when one teacher teaches and the other teacher sits on the sidelines as an observer.

Observations of teaching can be arranged during other times throughout the year. This is an opportunity to work side-by-side in each other's classrooms to develop effective teaching practices together and notice what's working in relation to student learning. For more information on Learning Rounds, consult City, Elmore, Fiarman and Teitel (2009), *Instructional Rounds in Education: A Networked Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning*.

Whole Group Mentorship Design & Professional Development Progression.

The whole group mentorship framework has been designed around Zachary's Mentorship Cycle, which progresses through four phases or preparing, negotiating, enabling growth and closure (2012). Notice that the content mirrors the professional development progression and sequencing from the TLA sessions. Each session is an outline, with room to develop and expand on details that are response to the needs of the new teachers as well as how the mentoring relationship and processes are unfolding. Teachers will be invited to provide feedback informally as well as through surveys (e.g. an on-line survey created by Fluid Survey <http://www.fluidsurveys.com>) in relation to the program goals and individual session goals throughout the duration of the project. This allows for an ongoing exchange between participants and facilitators to address and adjust content in response to needs, interests and questions that emerge from the work together. Being responsive to the participants will honour their feedback and create value for the teachers and the program as a whole.

Success Factors.

As a result of implementing a formalized mentorship, it is intended that the following factors surface as indicators of the initiative's success:

- Participants (both mentors and mentees) feel supported, valued and connected in the teaching community both personally and professionally;
- Increased self-efficacy, confidence and reflective practice
- Students data shows growth along a continuum such as Performance Standards
- Increased retention of high performing teachers in SD61

Note: At the end of the mentoring initiative, participants will be asked to reflect on their experiences, identify strengths of the design/process and areas for further development to a) help measure the success of the initiative and b) inform future planning/next steps. A synthesis of this information (e.g. survey, anecdotal feedback, etc.) will be shared with the Mentoring Working Group to shape subsequent directions, advocating the value of formal mentorship and (hopefully) securing funding.

Table 6

Whole Group/Learning Team Professional Development Sessions

Session #1:

Preparing: Building Community & Purpose

Timeline: October

- Welcome
- Review of Project Overview, Goals & Commitments
- Establish norms of collaborative work
- Overarching Frameworks of the Initiative:
 - The Mentoring Cycle (Zachary, 2012, pp. 87-89)
 - Teacher inquiry through the process of action research (e.g., Spirals of Inquiry by Halbert & Kaser, 2013; The Collaborative Learning Cycle by Lipton & Wellman, 2012, p. 26)
- Creating a common understanding of mentorship e.g. process and discuss visuals/readings around the Mentoring Cycle, learning focused-conversations, observations and collaboration.

- Learning Team Time: Guide for Initial Mentoring Conversation -*Who are we? How are we going to learn and work together?*
 - Possible resource: Exercise 4.1 Getting Ready: Initial Conversation (Zachary, 2012, p.124)
- Spiral of Inquiry (Halbert & Kaser, 2013)
 - Surfacing an inquiry question/focus. Identify data sources/evidence to bring to next session to answer the questions “What’s going on for our learners? How do you know? & Why does this matter?”
- Reflection
- Optional Assignments for Mentees:
 - New Teacher Journal Reflection e.g. Lipton & Wellman, 2003, p. 122
 - Readings from *The Mentee’s Guide: Making Mentoring Work for You* (Zachary, 2009): The Power and Process of Mentoring pp. 1-8; Group Mentoring (p. 9); Mentee Skills (p. 29-32) & Exercise 2.4 Mentee Skill Inventory (p. 30)

Recommended resources:

Halbert, J. & Kaser, L. (2013). *Spirals of inquiry for equity and quality*. Vancouver, Canada: BCPVPA Press.

Lipton, L., & Wellman, B. (2003). *Mentoring matters: A practical guide to learning-focused relationships* (2nd ed.). Sherman, CT: Mira Via.

Lipton, L., & Wellman, B. (2012). *Got data? Now what?* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Zachary, L. (2012). *The mentor’s guide: Facilitating effective learning relationships* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.

Zachary, L. (2009). *The Mentee’s guide: Making mentoring work for you*. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.

Websites:

Mentoring BC: Bringing Educators Together (The New Teacher Mentorship Project)
<http://m2.edcp.educ.ubc.ca/mentoringbc/>

New Teacher Centre <http://newteachercentre.org/index.php>

Session #2:

Negotiating: Finding a Learning Focus

The Collaborative Learning Cycle & Modelled Pro-D

Timeline: November

- Welcome

- Review of Project Overview, Goals & Commitments
- Review norms of collaborative work
- Overarching Frameworks of the Initiative:
 - The Mentoring Cycle (Zachary, 2012, pp. 87-89)
 - Teacher inquiry through the process of action research (e.g., Spirals of Inquiry by Halbert & Kaser, 2013; The Collaborative Learning Cycle by Lipton & Wellman, 2012, p. 26)
- Learning Team Time: Engage in Collaborative Learning Cycle (Wellman & Lipton, 2012) with class sets of student assessment/evidence to surface patterns and hone inquiry question
- Learning Focused Conversations → moving a goal into an actionable plan
- Targeted Professional Development e.g. a modelled lesson sequence drawing on an instructional design framework such as SmartLearning:
 - In the role as Teacher & Learner: facilitators model unit and/or lesson design; possibilities for modelling instruction include: co-constructed criteria; strategic scaffolding with tools/strategies to set students up for a final task/demonstration of learning; assessment for learning strategies woven throughout
- Reflections & planning next steps
- Optional Assignments for Mentees:
 - Journal Reflection e.g. Lipton & Wellman, 2003, p. 123 and/or 124
 - Readings/Exercises from *The Mentee's Guide: Making Mentoring Work for You* (Zachary, 2009) Exercise 4.2 SMART Goal Checklist p. 62; Confidentiality p. 65-67; Exercise 4.4 Confidentiality Checklist p. 68

Session #3:

Enabling Growth: Targeted Professional Development and Collaborative Inquiry

Timeline: December/January

- Welcome
- Review of Project Overview, Goals & Commitments
- Review norms of collaborative work
- Overarching Frameworks of the Initiative:
 - The Mentoring Cycle (Zachary, 2012, pp. 87-89)
 - Teacher inquiry through the process of action research (e.g., Spirals of Inquiry by Halbert & Kaser, 2013; The Collaborative Learning Cycle by Lipton & Wellman, 2012, p. 26)
- Warm-up activity: Connecting, Building Community & Purpose; set a personal goal for the session

- In Learning Groups: Exploring Individual Record of Action & Results *What have you tried? What did you notice? What did you learn (about teaching and learning)? Planning for next steps...?* (TLAs to draw on Learning Focused Conversations (Wellman & Lipton, 2003) to facilitate dialogue and provide feedback)
- As a whole group: reflecting on our work so far (Mid-year discussion)
- Modelled Pro-D NOTE: this should respond and reflect needs of participants
- Overview of Learning Rounds
- Survey/Feedback from participants
- Optional Assignments for Mentees:
 - Journal Reflection e.g. Lipton & Wellman, 2003, p. 125
 - Readings/Exercises from *The Mentee's Guide: Making Mentoring Work for You* (Zachary, 2009) Keep the Focus on Learning pp. 82, 84, 86-89; Exercise 5.2 New Learning Opportunities p. 85; Feedback pp. 93-97

Enabling Growth: Targeted Professional Development and Collaborative Inquiry

Timeline: February/March

- Welcome
- Review of Project Overview, Goals & Commitments
- Review norms of collaborative work
- Overarching Frameworks of the Initiative:
 - The Mentoring Cycle (Zachary, 2012, pp. 87-89)
 - Teacher inquiry through the process of action research (e.g., Spirals of Inquiry by Halbert & Kaser, 2013; The Collaborative Learning Cycle by Lipton & Wellman, 2012, p. 26)
- In Learning Groups: Exploring Individual Record of Action & Results: *What have you tried? What did you notice? What did you learn (about teaching and learning)? Planning for next steps...?* (TLAs to draw on Learning Focused Conversations (Wellman & Lipton, 2003) to facilitate dialogue and provide feedback)
- Modelled Pro-D (NOTE: this should respond and reflect needs of participants)
- Reflecting and planning next steps
- Survey/Feedback from participants
- Optional Assignments for Mentees:
 - Journal Reflection e.g. New Teacher Journal Reflection e.g. Lipton & Wellman, 2003, p. 126
 - Readings/Exercises from *The Mentee's Guide: Making Mentoring Work for You* (Zachary, 2009) review Tips for Mentees in Engaging in Feedback

p. 97

Celebrating, Reflecting & Closing

Timeline: May/June

As a mentoring initiative comes to an end, English (1999) and Zachary (2009; 2012) recommend integrating time to prepare for change. It is also important to celebrate the strengths and successes of the mentoring relationship and process (Zachary, 2000). Mentors utilize an appreciative, strengths-based approach to help facilitate conversations and reflections in learning teams. “Closure links the present to the future for both the mentors and mentees” (Wong & Premkumar, 2007, p. 10).

- Welcome
- Review of Project Overview, Goals & Commitments
- Review norms of collaborative work
- Overarching Frameworks of the Initiative:
 - The Mentoring Cycle (Zachary, 2012, pp. 87-89)
 - Teacher inquiry through the process of action research (e.g., Spirals of Inquiry by Halbert & Kaser, 2013; The Collaborative Learning Cycle by Lipton & Wellman, 2012, p. 26)
- Learning Team Time: Engage in Collaborative Learning Cycle (Wellman & Lipton, 2012) with class sets of student assessment/evidence to surface patterns and notice trends in student learning (e.g. using Performance Standards)
- Appreciative inquiry/lens: reflecting and celebrating the strengths of the work that unfolded over the year
 - Teacher Journal Reflection e.g. Lipton & Wellman, 2003, p. 127 and/or Closure Conversations from *The Mentee’s Guide...* (Zachary, 2009, pp. 102-107)
- Building on strengths & planning next steps...e.g. What will help participants transition from the support of the group? How might the conversations or relationships continue? What might it look like to continue the work at the school-level (outside of the structure of a “program”)?
- Survey mentees: collect feedback based on goals of the project as well as individual anecdotal comments and reflections

Summary

The intention with this design is that the initial cycle of this initiative will be three years long, starting with a pilot group as a learning laboratory, and then refining and

tweaking the structure while it, hopefully, grows in size during subsequent years.

Mentors, known as Teaching and Learning Advocates, will be required to apply and commit for a minimum of one year, but preferably a three year term to maximize training, professional development and growth of the mentoring initiative over time. Early-career teachers can self-select to be in the program for one or more years, with a maximum of three years. A project coordinator or team will be required to professionally develop the Teaching and Learning Advocates in addition to planning and facilitating the whole group sessions and learning rounds.

Throughout the duration of this mentorship initiative, surveys and data are collected, as continuous feedback loops will allow for the program to strengthen and take shape based on teacher needs, interests, readiness and suggestions. After the three-year cycle, the effectiveness of the project from multiple stakeholders' perspectives will be taken into account. From here, a vision will be developed around the future of a district funded early career teacher support project and looking for possible next steps at the school-based level. For example, after three years, there may be readiness within SD 61 where schools will serve as the place for this work such that these collaborative structures and learning-focused conversations are purposefully incorporated into the school timetable with the support of formal learning leaders and staff members.

Conclusion

The overarching vision for this program is to shift culture as to how new teachers are integrated into a school learning community while also supporting the ongoing

professional learning of all teachers with the aim of making a difference for student learning and achievement. Through collaboration, teachers often feel emotionally supported and professionally challenged. The ideal scenario is a dynamic exchange of teaching and learning through reciprocal mentoring relationships, built on trust and risk-taking kindled through the collaborative work. Participants develop and share effective teaching practices that purposefully and strategically promote growth and high levels of achievement for our students.

It is the belief that a formal mentorship project will enhance and enrich the existing work that is unfolding in Victoria. This design is focused specifically around student learning as new teachers are supported through reciprocal-learning relationships and mentorship processes while mentor teachers deepen their skills and capacities as leaders and learners. I propose that this program is the starting place for a formalized, structured yet flexible and responsible mentorship program. Over time, it is hoped that teacher induction with a mentorship component framed around collaborative inquiry becomes the norm or way of “doing business” in terms of how the organization operates as a whole.

Chapter 5: Looking Forward

Summary of the Design

This research design focuses on the development of a mentorship initiative that is informed by theory and research while aligning with existing strength-based practices in the Greater Victoria School District. The aim of this design was to articulate what mentorship, as a formalized process, could look like, who would be involved and how it would unfold. It is the intention that this design be used as a starting point to engage stakeholders and new teachers in a dialogue around the need for sanctioned time and space for mentoring. The literature supports mentorship as a way to shift attitudes and the overall tone of experienced colleagues and professional culture in welcoming new teachers. Recent research has surfaced this cautionary message in relation to our professional culture and norms:

The notion that new teachers should “sink or swim” is deeply embedded in the teaching profession despite compelling evidence that such an approach drives some promising new teachers out of the profession altogether and negatively affects the careers of the many who stay. (Servage & Beck, 2013, p.4)

Overall, there is an abundance of research advocating the need for mentorship as a part of a high-quality induction, fostering and kindling the development of effective teachers who feel satisfied in their career, increasing confidence in their abilities to critically question and examine their practice, make adjustments based on what the student data is telling them and/or feedback from collaborative colleagues.

This mentorship design draws on existing structures in SD61 such as teacher inquiry projects offered through the Learning Initiatives Department (teacher professional development for teacher by teachers). Within these projects, teachers engage in teacher inquiry through the process of action research in school-based teams. Participants in these projects also engage in targeted professional development in response to teachers' needs and interests based on emerging trends in student data as areas for further development and instruction. Additionally, learning rounds (opportunities for co-planning, co-teaching and debriefing through release time) are often facilitated to deepen and enrich the learning as these opportunities catalyze application and transformation of teacher practice.

The processes mentioned in these teacher inquiry projects has been honed over several years of the Learning Initiative's existence in collaboration and consultation with teachers in the Victoria school district; thus, as mentoring is most likely to be successful and sustainable when aligned with an organization's existing initiatives, culture, and readiness, it was both strategic and intuitive to pull from current structures and approaches to develop an explicit, formalized and coherent mentorship design. Furthermore, to understand the larger provincial conversation around mentorship as well as how mentorship is transpiring in districts in B.C., I attended the New Teacher Mentorship Project summer institute in July 2014 and Teacher Mentorship Network of British Columbia meeting in January 2015. Based on professional conversations at these events along with investigating models of mentorship, I selected a team-based model or group mentoring instead of a traditional hierarchal one-to-one mentoring paradigm. "Group mentoring is a type of social networking that honours and shares the knowledge

and expertise of the individuals within a group” (Zachary, 2009, p. 9). This also aligns with a team-based or collaborative approach to inquiry, which is utilized in our District projects facilitated by Learning Initiative as well as the District Enhancing Learning, Project-Based Learning and Middle/Secondary Collaboration Grants.

The literature around new teacher’s experiences, including participation in formal as well as informal mentorship programs, was explored to help paint a picture of early-career teachers’ perceived challenges and needs. This was helpful as it provided context and a strong justification for this work. A large number of teachers leave the profession within the beginning years of teaching due the complexity and demanding nature of the job, which occurs with little support and/or mostly in isolation. A recent study of Canadian teachers reported that mentorship was the most significant professional need for new teachers (Karsenti & Collin, 2013). Finally, framing and basing this mentorship initiative around the principles of adult learning theory was considered from the outset; it was important that the design, including sequencing and content, honours the unique experiences and pragmatic, self-directed nature of mature learners engaging in professional learning.

Areas for Further Development

This particular design focuses in on mentorship from the co-ordinator’s perspective, as my current role is a Learning Coach with Learning Initiatives. As such, the design reflects mentorship from the standpoint of what steps would be necessary to bring together a group of teachers, plan, implement, facilitate and evaluate the initiative. To move forward with mentorship that is both sustainable and effective, it must also involve the formal learning leaders – our principals and vice principals at the district and

school-based levels; therefore, further development around the role of school administrators is needed to fully realize the vision for induction, including mentorship, as cultural transformation.

Mentorship cannot be a stand-alone or “one off” program. It must be integrated into the fabric of a school and organization’s culture. Next steps may include a district handbook for Principals and Vice Principals outlining the mentorship program, benefits, phases of being a new teacher along with ways to support, and suggestions as to how promoting and encouraging mentorship through collaborative inquiry can take shape at a school-based level. It is interesting to note here that the school administrator’s role in relation to beginning teacher mentorship is inconsistently identified across Canada (Kutsyuruba, Godden, & Tregunna, 2013). In order to address and mitigate the downfalls of omitting explicit roles and responsibilities for administration, I would encourage principals and vice-principals to join the conversation to help flesh this out in greater detail. The intention is that this particular research design could spark dialogue around how administrators could be involved to increase consistency and coherence around supporting formal and informal mentorship in SD61. In addition to bringing an administrator’s perspective to the table for the design, perhaps formal coaching and mentoring of administrators could be developed and implemented in tandem with the mentorship initiative to show that mentorship is valued at all levels of the organization. Visibility, highlighting that the district as a whole is serious and committed to professional growth and learning, is key to celebrating success, learning from challenges, and creating readiness to embrace change. Systematic sustained supports and resources

for all staff members and administrators will help to shape a sustainable norm and culture of collaborative practice.

Servage and Beck's research (2013) reinforced the significance of the principal's role in creating and maintaining a structure to support new teachers through induction, "What is needed is a broad-based induction initiative that provides professional development not just for novice teachers but also for administrators" (p. 6).

Organizational leaders are pivotal in establishing a culture where mentoring can thrive, transform learning, and taps into the lived experiences of professionals (Zachary, 2005).

When the principal shows support and builds school culture through shared leadership "the opportunity for shared values and vision promote[s] professional relationships among novice teachers and experienced teachers; moral is improved and beginning teachers' self-concept is strengthened" (Kutsyuruba et al., 2013, p. 7). Conversely, the principal's role around evaluation of teacher practice can overshadow or create conflict when principals attempt to support professional growth and capacity building (Kutsyuruba et al., 2013); thus, developing the principal's role around teacher induction and professional learning must support growth through formative feedback and not in an evaluative or "fix the teacher" approach.

If the mentorship program goes to implementation, developing a digital space for sharing of resources, questions, and creating community could be established. One such example is the district's Twitter hashtag #sd61learn which could serve as a place to continue conversations and build a professional learning network. Leveraging technology could certainly be developed further, perhaps in collaboration with our SD61 Educational Technology Co-ordinator and the Greater Victoria Teacher's Association.

Limitations of the Design

This research design has focused in on mentorship, which means that there is further work to be done around the development of mentorship within a larger framework of quality teacher induction as a whole. For example, visioning needs to take place between stakeholders such as Human Resources, the local teacher's union, senior management, a new teacher representative, etc., as to what a comprehensive, high-quality induction process will look like in SD61. New or early career teacher induction is a multifaceted process that takes buy-in and commitment from all stakeholders to be viable, sustainable and impactful.

Another area for further development would be connecting with local universities to build partnerships and bridges between pre-service to in-service. This partnership could help elevate the shock for new teachers as they transition from the world of student-teacher to a newly certified teacher in the profession. Universities could possibility take on a mandate of collaboratively contributing and monitoring new teacher induction and/or make it part of the undergraduate work.

Finally, formalizing mentorship within a framework can oversimplify the extremely complex and organic process of mentorship. That being said, a district must start somewhere; although I have approached mentorship as a professional development initiative/project, it is with best intentions that this could be used as a springboard to develop mentorship into something much more powerful – where all stakeholders naturally take on the collective responsibility of supporting each other through a inquiry mindset, for the betterment of our students and education.

Action Plan for Implementation

Natural next steps towards implementation would be initiating conversations with stakeholders to form a mentorship working group to assess if there is readiness, commitment and agreement among these parties to formalize mentorship in the Greater Victoria School District. Would the district and union be able to partner around this initiative? If yes, then conversations would progress into creating a shared vision, articulating goals and purpose. The final hurdle towards implementation would be funding. Finding and securing funding in a time of significant budget cuts to education in British Columbia would pose a major obstacle in terms of moving forward with mentorship. School boards around the province, including Victoria, are increasingly forced to cut funding from initiatives or positions that are not directly involved with students in the classroom. I wonder, even if a strong case was made for mentorship in SD61, would it be a priority for our board? Would it be financially feasible at this time?

Obtaining funding to release mentors for training, as well as release Teaching and Learning Advocates and new teachers for whole group sessions and job-embedded learning rounds (co-plan, co-teach, debrief/reflect) would be fundamental in terms of making the mentorship initiative worthwhile. In these times of tight financial constraints, some districts in the province are reducing costs for mentorship initiatives by hosting the mentor training sessions as a summer retreat or over dinner, as release time would not be required for these times. Planning for the entire mentorship initiative to take place after school, however, would inevitably put a significant amount of pressure on both mentors and mentees. It is important to note here that although there are many benefits to formalizing mentoring within a district, it should not be assumed that mentors would be

able to meet the demands of this important role in addition to their teaching assignments without some release time. Mentorship is an additional commitment in a demanding profession. Honouring the value and importance of the work of mentorship by acknowledging the mentors' time can occur when time and space are sanctioned along with adequate funding – to make it both reasonable and sustainable for all parties.

Conclusion

It is hoped that that mentorship will be given serious time, money and attention. Ultimately, the goal is that an explicit, formalized mentorship initiative could be implemented as the beginning steps in cultivating a culture where collaborative learning and mentoring is the way of doing business. As English (1999) encourages, “In this new workplace, everyone is involved in giving and receiving mentoring, and in educating new professionals about the field and its challenges” (p. 201). Working towards this vision of continuous collaborative learning has the capacity to engage educational professionals of all levels of experience and expertise. Cross-pollination between generations and colleagues will allow for creative and innovative problem solving and support in a profession that is increasingly complex. Drawing on networks of professionals will allow education as a whole to adapt at the rapid rate of change in our modern world. New teachers across Canada and internationally have spoken – mentorship through collaborative inquiry isn't just a “want,” it is a professional need or necessity. Also, as David Weinberger suggests, “The smartest person in the room is the room” (2012, p. xiii). Together we can yield better results. Our students deserve an environment that models and enables a dynamic, collaborative, networked approach to teaching and learning.

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