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PREVIEW

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**Evaluating the effects of mentors and trained mentors on the
classroom performance and overall teaching performance of
beginning teachers**

Faber, Howard Hale, Ed.D.

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 1989

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PREVIEW

EVALUATING THE EFFECTS OF MENTORS AND TRAINED MENTORS
ON THE CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE AND OVERALL TEACHING
PERFORMANCE OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

by

Howard Hale Faber

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For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Interdepartmental Area of Administration,
Curriculum and Instruction

Under the Supervision of Professor Ronald G. Joekel

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 1989

TITLE

Evaluating the Effects of Mentors and Trained Mentors on the Classroom
Performance and Overall Teaching Performance of Beginning Teachers

BY

Howard Hale Faber

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EVALUATING THE EFFECTS OF MENTORS AND TRAINED MENTORS
ON THE CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE AND OVERALL TEACHING
PERFORMANCE OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

Howard Hale Faber, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 1989

Adviser: Ronald G. Joekel

The use of experienced teachers to help beginning teachers has been suggested by many researchers as being particularly helpful to beginning teachers. This approach is often called "mentoring." While there have been some indications that "mentoring" improved beginning teachers' classroom performance, no evidence was found in the literature to establish that. Having the mentors trained to perform the function of mentors has also been strongly recommended. However, no studies were found that established whether or not mentors need to be trained.

This study had two purposes. One was to determine if assigned mentors were successful in helping beginning teachers improve classroom performance and be more successful in their overall teaching performance. A second purpose was to determine if trained mentors were more successful in helping beginning teachers improve classroom performance than untrained mentors.

The study was conducted in a large midwestern urban school district. Three groups of beginning teachers (a total of 26) were included in the study. One group had

trained, assigned mentors that attended a ten-hour training course. Another group had assigned untrained mentors. A third group had no assigned mentors. Each beginning teacher was observed four times. Observers used the Stallings Time Off Task Classroom Observation Instrument to determine on task percentages for each observation. Building principal evaluations were used as a second method of measuring teaching performance.

Analysis of results showed no significant differences between the groups. There were no differences in the beginning teacher performances as evaluated by building principals. The data from the classroom observations by trained observers showed that the group with trained mentors had a slightly higher on task percentage (91%) than the group with untrained mentors (90%). The group with no assigned mentors had a slightly lower percentage than the other two groups (89%).

In this study assigned mentors did not significantly affect beginning teacher classroom performance or overall teaching performance, and trained mentors had no significantly greater effect than untrained mentors on the classroom performance and overall teaching performance of beginning teachers.

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At the end of this production, our daughter, Hayley, came to us. She was the final inspiration to finish. She can't read this yet but some day she will.

My final thanks go to my wife, Nancy, who helped me through it all. I couldn't have done it without her.

Chapter 1

The Problem

Context

School districts have spent considerable resources recruiting teachers. At the same time, fewer college graduates have been entering teaching (Hanes & Mitchell, 1985), and a large number of those beginning teachers have not remained in the profession (Huling-Austin, 1986; Schlechty & Vance, 1983). As a result, the National Education Association has predicted that there will be substantial shortages of teachers in the near future. Because of this, and in some states because of legislative mandates, school districts have started teacher assistance programs designed to keep more beginning teachers in teaching. These programs have come to be known as "induction programs," with one important component being individual mentoring (Mohlman, 1982; Huling-Austin, Barnes, & Smith, 1985; Burke & Heideman, 1985).

There have been many descriptions and studies of induction programs. Most of the studies have used surveys to evaluate the programs. Some of the studies have shown that induction programs help keep beginning teachers in teaching (Huling-Austin, 1986; Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986). Other studies have determined what assistance

beginning teachers need. There has been general agreement that most beginning teachers feel isolated from their peers and other support groups (Johnston, 1981; Burke & Heideman, 1985; Pataniczek & Isaacson, 1981; Corcoran, 1981). There has also been general agreement that beginning teachers need help in classroom management (Blair, 1982; Gray & Gray, 1985; Huling-Austin et al., 1985). Recent studies at the University of Texas at Austin indicated that help in classroom management should be given the first semester, and help in improving teaching skills should be given the second semester. A majority of the reports found the best method for giving help was pairing beginning teachers with experienced fellow teachers, preferably teaching the same grade level or subject (Gray & Gray, 1985; Mohlman, Kierstad, & Gundlach, 1982; Tisher, 1982). This approach is called "mentoring." Having the mentor teachers trained as mentors has been strongly recommended (Johnston, 1981; Tisher, 1982; Gray & Gray, 1985), but the author found no studies that established whether or not mentors themselves need to be trained to perform that particular function. It has also been suggested that mentoring programs improved beginning teacher performance (Huling-Austin, 1986; Mohlman, 1982; Edwards, 1984); but again, the author found no studies that firmly established that.

Though more and more induction programs have recently appeared, the majority have either not been evaluated or

have not published the results. Of those that have been assessed, only six were found that used more than one data collection method. The others used beginning teacher questionnaires, even though one major study indicated that surveys of beginning teachers are not reliable, particularly those pertaining to teaching ability (Ryan, 1979).

As a result of the lack of conclusive evidence about how best to organize induction programs, school district personnel officers have had little meaningful guidance as they have shaped their induction programs. This study is significant because, using several data collection methods, it contributes in two areas, both of which have been partly, but not substantially, supported in the literature. The first is determining whether trained mentors were more helpful to beginning teachers than untrained mentors. The second is determining whether mentoring programs improved beginning teacher classroom performance.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine if assigned mentors were successful in helping beginning teachers improve classroom performance and be more successful in their overall teaching, which includes their school activities outside the classroom. Furthermore, the study was undertaken to determine if trained mentors were more successful in helping beginning teachers than untrained

mentors. Mentors in this study were experienced teachers from the same school as the beginning teachers.

Three groups of beginning teachers were included in the study. One group had no assigned mentors. A second group had assigned mentors. A third group had assigned mentors who were trained to help beginning teachers. Dependent variables were classroom performance of the beginning teachers as measured by student engaged rate and overall teaching success as evaluated by the principals of the beginning teachers.

Hypotheses

H01. Beginning teachers who have assigned mentors will be significantly better in classroom performance and more successful in their overall teaching than beginning teachers who do not have assigned mentors.

H02. Beginning teachers who have trained, assigned mentors will be significantly better in classroom performance and more successful in their overall teaching than beginning teachers who have assigned mentors who were not trained.

Assumptions

1. The building principals can accurately rate the overall ability of their beginning teachers.
2. The training of the trained mentors was appropriate for helping beginning teachers.