

## **Effective Induction and Mentoring Programs for K-12 Teachers and Teacher Education Faculty: Perspectives of an Operational Model**

Tak Cheung Chan

*Professor Emeritus, Kennesaw State University*

### **Abstract**

This article is focused on illustrating a new faculty induction and mentoring model in K-12 and higher education institutes. Based on Edward Deming's Total Quality Management concept and the National Staff Development Council's nine professional development standards, the model starts with a continuous improvement component and ends in program evaluation. Implementing an induction and mentoring program for new faculties will help increase the retention rate of new faculties. For an induction and mentoring program to be successful, policy mandates and human resources need to be made available for support. The state-of-art and future development of new faculty induction and mentoring programs are also explored.

### **Introduction**

Huge amounts of resources have been invested in preparing teachers for elementary and secondary schools in the United States. The amount has been increasing due to demands for specialized categories of teachers and the rapid development of technology integration (Crosco, 2014; Moye, 2009). However, a review of literature shows that a significant five percentage of the beginning teachers actually dropped out of the teaching profession in the first five years of practice (Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll, 2012). The report is alarming. Beginning teacher dropout is a clear indication of waste of resources invested in teacher education (Moye, 2009). Recent study by Morello (2014) shows that the teacher turnover rate in elementary and secondary schools is higher than ever. Similarly, many higher education

faculties are coming from an elementary and secondary school teaching background and some of them could not survive in the first few years of their career in higher education (Basu, 2012; Rosenman & Lunning, 2014). Previous studies (California State University, 2011; Soomro & Ahmad, 2013; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2001) of faculty retention in higher education yielded similar results. A call for examining the reasons behind the failing faculties in elementary, secondary and higher education institutes is necessary so that effective measures can be taken to retain our best teachers in the teaching profession. In helping beginning teachers and higher education faculty to get established and be successful, this paper attempts to explore the institutional possibilities in formalizing faculty induction and mentoring programs in K-12 and higher education institutes through the development of an operational model. Research has shown that through the development and implementation of a faculty induction program and a faculty mentoring program, new teachers in elementary and secondary schools have been able to get themselves well established in their new positions (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Many of them have demonstrated excellent performance in their career and are sustainable in the teaching profession. In higher education institutes, administrators are encouraged to establish formal mentoring programs for fostering collegiality for newcomers to a department (Bensimon, Ward & Sanders, 2000; Mark, Link, Morahan, Pololi, Reznik & Tropez-Sims, 2001). Through mentoring programs, many new faculties are empowered and have

sustained their tenure in higher education (Luna & Cullen, 1995).

### **A Conceptual Framework of Faculty Induction and Mentoring Programs**

The development of faculty induction and mentoring programs is based on the idea of investment in continuous support and development of human resources. It is originated from the conceptual framework of Edwards Deming's Total Quality Management (TQM) which consists of fourteen points of business management highlights (Swinton, 2013):

1. Create constancy of purpose
2. Adopt the new philosophy
3. Cease inspection, require evidence
4. Improve the quality of supplies
5. Continuously improve production
6. Train and educate all employees
7. Supervisors must help people
8. Drive out fear
9. Eliminate boundaries
10. Eliminate the use of slogans
11. Eliminate numerical standards
12. Let people be proud of their work
13. Encourage self-improvement
14. Commit to ever-improving quality

All these fourteen points have strongly endorsed the intent to promote the philosophy of continuous improvement by updating the products and services of a prospering business. Continuous improvement is achieved through directing investment of resources in in-service of employees. TQM's advocacy for continuing improvement of products and services has significant implications for implementation in education. It is the driving force behind the development of the faculty induction and mentoring programs. Even though TQM was first designed for business use, it has meaningful interpretation and extensive application in educational management fields (Chan & Wan, 2008). "Adopt new philosophy" in TQM refers to the promotion

of educational innovation. "Train and educate employees" in TQM directly suggests a strong professional development program in education. "Supervisors must help people" reflects effective support from the educational leadership. "Drive out fear" promotes a positive environment for teaching and learning. "Let people be proud of their work" and "Encourage self-improvement" are indications of building self-efficacy of teachers so they can be confident of what they are doing.

In addition, the nine professional development standards created by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) (2007) provide substantial contents for the induction and mentoring programs in K-12 and teacher education institutes. The nine standards are:

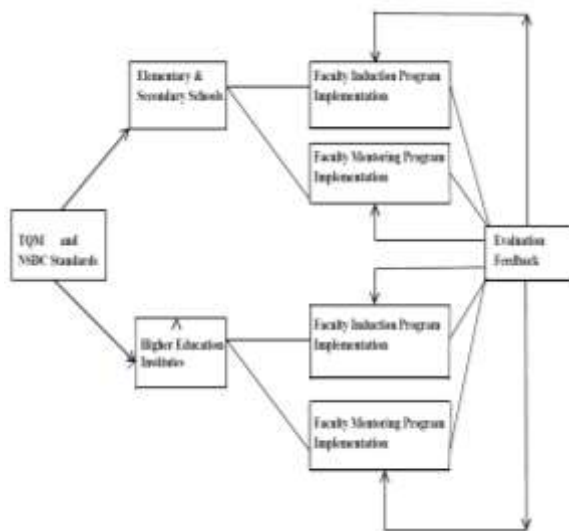
1. Content knowledge and quality teaching
2. Research-basis
3. Collaboration
4. Diverse learning needs
5. Student learning environments
6. Family involvement
7. Evaluation
8. Data-driven design
9. Teacher learning

These NSDC standards have been considered and mostly employed as guidelines by K-12 and higher education institutes in developing goals, objectives, activities and evaluation criteria of induction and mentoring programs. While TQM provides the justifications for induction and mentoring programs, the NSDC standards support the induction and mentoring programs in their developmental effort.

### **Faculty Induction and Mentoring: An Operational Model**

Faculty induction is a program of activities to introduce new faculties to the new teaching environments. It is followed by faculty mentoring which is a program of activities to work with new faculties to ensure

their continued success in their teaching career. State policies on teacher induction and mentoring programs have included program operational details such as program standards, mentor quality, program delivery and program accountability (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012) to ensure a smooth program implementation. Most K-12 and higher education institutes have developed both faculty induction and mentoring programs to work with their new faculties. The background behind faculty induction and mentoring programs is basically a continued improvement for teaching productivities. All program activities are evaluated against their established goals to determine the extent of program achievements. The outcomes of program evaluation will serve as feedback for program improvement to retain new faculties. A conceptual model of faculty induction and mentoring programs is developed as indicated by Figure 1 below.



*Figure 1: An Operational Model of Faculty Induction and Mentoring*

### **Faculty Induction and Mentoring Activities**

#### **Faculty Induction**

Faculty induction activities in K-12 and higher education institutes are very similar in

each level. New faculties usually have many basic questions to ask about the organization in which they work. To save time on handling the many basic questions and answers, school or department administrators can form a small committee of veteran faculties to help develop a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) with answers to be disseminated to new faculties for reading. FAQ proves to be a very direct and effective way to introduce the basic school/department information and regulations to new faculties. Other induction activities could include brainstorming new faculties with organizational culture, business procedures, sensitive issues, pitfalls and fulfillment relating to teaching, job advancement and professional development. School or department administrators may discuss with new faculties the expected professional standards, behaviors and attitudes of faculties. These induction activities will prepare new faculties to get ready to start their career in their new environments. Effective induction activities will drive the fear out of the mind of new faculties and implant in them a feeling of comfort and support to build their confidence in their new positions (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012).

#### **Faculty Mentoring**

After new faculties are inducted into the organizations, they need continuous support through mentoring programs in school or department. The foci of mentoring in elementary and secondary schools are placed on developing new faculty's teaching strategies, acquainting them with data analysis, working with them to meet professional standards, and helping to prepare them to meet with parents and community members. Through the mentoring program, veteran teachers will work collaboratively with new faculties in class planning and development to ensure effective teaching and learning to improve student

achievement and close student achievement gaps (National Mentoring Center, 2003).

Faculty mentoring activities in higher education take a different approach. Many new faculty members in higher education have K-12 teaching and administrative backgrounds. However, when they start their career in higher education, they are facing a different academic environment that they are not familiar with. Veteran faculties need to work with new faculties to make sure that they understand the three basic job expectations of a faculty in higher education: teaching, scholarship and services (Piercy, Giddings, Allen, Dixon, Meszaros, & Joest, 2005). Teaching performance is shown in abilities to teach adult classes with technology integration, skills in handling on-line classes, and capabilities to develop curricula and courses in their areas of specialization. Mentoring activities need to include the development of their scholarship skills of new faculties in their areas of expertise. Scholarship performance is demonstrated in academic activities involved in peer-reviewed publications, presentations, and other creative activities. Senior faculties need to advise their new colleagues to be involved in professional services at department, college, university, state, national and international levels to be successful.

### **Evaluating Faculty Induction and Mentoring Programs**

In the development of faculty induction and mentoring programs, consideration has to be given to planning for evaluation. Goals and objectives need to be established to set the directions for program development. Based on the goals and objectives, appropriate activities can be arranged to achieve a meaningful purpose. Then, evaluation of program outcomes has to be devised to indicate program effectiveness. Evaluation feedback can be used for

references in redesigning the faculty induction and mentoring programs for improvement (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012). It is important that the evaluation component to be data driven and scientifically based for analysis. The program evaluation process can be both formative and summative to allow mid-term modification of alternative strategies to retain faculties (Popham, 1993). The evaluation component is the same for induction and mentoring programs of K-12 and higher education levels.

### **Implementation of Faculty Induction and Mentoring Programs**

Faculty induction and mentoring programs in elementary and secondary schools and higher education institutes can be successfully implemented in different formats: by one-to-one, by group, and/or by academic discipline. In the one-to-one format, senior faculties are assigned to work with new faculties to get acquainted with their new jobs and to grow professionally for continuous success. In this individual induction and mentoring format, consideration has to be given to match interest and personality accommodation. A mentor and a mentee have to work harmoniously to produce results. Successful examples can be seen in co-teaching between the mentor and the mentee (Thompson, Paek, Goe, & Ponte, 2005). Not only mentee learns from a mentor's teaching experiences, a mentor also benefits through confirmation of a mentee's action. In higher education, much of the induction and mentoring effort could be placed on the development of scholarly activities to make sure that new faculties are not intimidated by scholarship requirements.

In some cases, it might be beneficial for conducting induction and mentoring activities as a group when all mentors and mentees have a chance to interact. Some of the basic induction information is common to

all new faculties regardless of their teaching fields. The group induction and mentoring approach in elementary, secondary and higher education institutes helps save time and effort for all parties (Curran & Goldrick, 2002). In addition, when basic information is provided to all the mentees at one time, the possibility of distortion due to individual mentor interpretation is eliminated.

Small group mentoring by academic discipline seems to work very well in K-12 and higher education institutes. Mentors are usually assigned by school principals or department heads to help the new faculties. However, some of the mentors actually volunteer their service to help because of their professional seniority. It actually works best when mentors and mentees have the same teaching area and can actually work together in planning classes of their mutual interests. They can work together to monitor the instructional process to ensure high level of instructional effectiveness (Ignersoll & Smith, 2004). Mentees learn best when they actually put their hands to work to resolve real classroom issues under the guidance of the mentors. On the other hand, mentors, serving as role-models in different teaching and academic situations, can enrich themselves with innovative strategies tried out by their mentees.

### **Personnel Involvement in Faculty Induction and Mentoring**

For the faculty induction and mentoring programs to be successful, school administrators, department heads, faculties and staffs play major roles and assume significant responsibilities. Each party will work toward the same goal of encouraging new faculties to succeed by facilitating them in their new teaching roles. Surely, in a positive and supportive school environment, new faculties grow in their confidence and develop their professional competency in their education career. It takes the entire school/department

to support effective faculty induction and mentoring programs to retain new faculties.

### **School Administrators**

School administrators take the leadership in developing the faculty induction and mentoring programs. They assign mentors to mentees in working as collaborating teams to achieve a common goal. They encourage the development of professional learning communities in each academic discipline to involve all the new faculties to share responsibilities for improving student achievement. They take new faculties under their wings with special care and attention to supervising their work. School administrators provide new faculties opportunities for professional development and take advantage of every possible means to drive the fear out of their minds (Chan & Jiang, 2009).

### **Department Heads**

Heads of academic departments in higher education can work with new faculties from the perspectives of department leadership. The induction and mentoring experiences department heads provide can be very unique because department heads and the new faculties are in the same teaching field. It makes it more convenient for them to work closely with new faculties and pay special attention to classroom practices they exercise (Bensimon, Ward & Sanders, 2000). They are also in a better position to understand the instructional needs of their fellow new colleagues. In addition, with the development of the professional learning communities, department heads can play very important coordinating roles to assist new faculties to grow professionally.

### **Senior Faculties**

Faculties of various expertise and experiences can help new faculties in many ways. Serving as mentors, they can work with new faculties from a person-to-person basis.

This approach usually achieves better with a personality congruence that creates a sense of mutual respect. Senior faculties can invite new faculties to serve on various curriculum and school improvement committees so they can work together to experience the professional culture of the school. In professional development activities, senior faculties can encourage new faculties to join them in advancing their teaching techniques by exploring innovative initiatives. In unofficial capacities, senior faculties can involve new faculties in social events to develop their personal and social connections with the school or department communities. Additionally, some of the junior faculties who have had recent mentee experiences can serve as mentors very effectively to help other new faculties.

### **Staffs**

School or department staffs including secretaries, bookkeepers, custodians, media specialists, nurses, kitchen managers and technology specialists can be of great help to new faculties in their areas of responsibilities. School or department staffs that are familiar with school business operating procedures and culture can prepare basic information about their areas of school operation for dissemination to new faculties and are ready to sit down with them to go over the procedures of getting thing done. With facilitation from school r department staffs, new faculties can be well prepared in reacting appropriately to different situations with less frustration in the new working environment. Through the assistance of the staffs, new faculties can comfortably adapt to their professional lives in the new school or department settings.

If everybody in elementary, secondary and higher education institutes plays his/her significant role in helping new faculties in induction and mentoring programs, new faculties would feel the warmth and sincerity

of the new working place. This is crucial to the success of new faculties. Through induction and mentoring programs, new faculties are ready to launch their most meaningful and responsible lifelong career in education.

### **Faculty Induction and Mentoring: State-of-the-Art**

New development in faculty induction and mentoring has emerged with emphasis in a collaborative interaction. In elementary and secondary schools, the adoption of professional learning communities (PLC) is a commonly used approach to inducing and mentoring new faculties. Professional learning communities in school as advocated by Dufour, Dufour and Eaker (2008) emphasize on helping the professional growth of new faculties by placing them to work with experienced faculties as a group. Through a collaborative partnership, new faculties learn under the guidance of experienced faculties not only to plan and develop unit and lesson plans together, but also explore new instructional initiatives for experimentation. Quite different from the traditional self-learning approach, new faculties are placed in groups where they share their ideas and learning outcomes with their fellow colleagues. This new development of PLC has not only proved to be beneficial to new faculties but also to all faculty members in elementary and secondary schools (Fulton, Yoon & Lee, 2005).

In many higher education organizations, in addition to one-to-one induction and mentoring, new faculties are invited for orientations to be welcomed by major university officials. An individual unit of the university, commonly known as the Center of Excellence in Teaching and Learning, is established to manage faculty professional development activities. The center is fully funded by the university to provide needed

workshops for faculty learning experiences. It also offers opportunities for competitive awards to faculty travel and research. Many grants are available to encourage faculties, particularly new faculties, to collaborate with senior members in their pursuit for scholarship. In addition, the center also administers award programs to recognize distinguished faculties in teaching, scholarship and services.

Another new development of mentoring programs takes the form of coaching. While the mentoring program asks new faculties to follow the directions of the mentors, coaching is identified as a technique to let new faculties understand their professional strength and potentials in the teaching fields. In many cases, experienced faculties serving as coaches would help new faculties analyze the teaching situations and offer possible course of options that new faculties can consider taking to address different situations. The coach would refrain from indicating the best option for the new faculties. The purpose of this new coaching approach is to develop the capabilities of new faculties for self-determination of the best instructional effectiveness in elementary, secondary and higher education institutes (Starcevich, 2009).

### **Future Development of Faculty Induction and Mentoring Programs**

New initiatives in the development of faculty induction and mentoring programs are being developed both at the higher education level and the K-12 school level. Teacher preparation institutes of higher education are beginning to plan for strengthening their programs by providing induction and mentoring support for their recent graduates. K-12 schools are also reworking their strategies in providing more effective induction and mentoring programs for their new teachers. Some of the future development of faculty induction and

mentoring programs are reported in the following.

### **Graduate Support Program**

In some states, like Georgia, teacher graduate support programs are already in place. Through the program, higher education institutes that prepare teachers will guarantee the quality of their graduates. If the graduate teachers do not perform per satisfaction of their employers, the preparation institutes have responsibilities to take back the graduate teachers for re-training (Chan, Richardson, & Pool, 2003; Chan, Webb, Bowen, Tubbs, & Arasi, 2004). The proposed graduate support program is in fact an extension of the guarantee program. Instead of waiting for complaints from employers, higher education institutes can take initiatives to provide support for their graduates now employed as new teachers in schools. Higher education faculties can offer to visit their recent teacher graduates periodically to ensure that they are doing well in assuming their daily duties. Frequent supports and updates from higher education faculties will provide beginning teachers the encouragement and their needed assistance. Higher education faculties can work collaboratively with elementary and secondary school faculties in the teacher induction and mentoring programs for mutual benefits.

### **Mentor and Mentee Teams**

While mentors and mentees form corresponding teams to work together for continuous improvement, mentors can meet from time to time to share their mentoring experiences so they can benefit from one another to become better mentors. A mentor may have initiated new mentoring strategies other mentors could possibly use. All mentors need to be aware of the mentoring failure stories to remind themselves not to follow the same tracks. In the same way,

mentees can meet as a team to discuss things that they learn from mentors. Many success stories deserve to be shared. Mentors and mentees may find themselves involved in many meetings in these mentoring approaches that provide many opportunities for fruitful exchanges of ideas worthy of exploring (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). These mentor and mentee teams should work in K-12 and higher education institutes.

### **Factors Contributing to Successful Faculty Induction and Mentoring Programs**

Some significant factors can contribute to successful faculty induction and mentoring programs in K-12 and higher education institutes. These factors are related to educational policies, leadership, mentors and mentees. They are outlined as follows.

#### **A Policy for Induction and Mentoring**

For induction and mentoring programs to be successful, a policy of requirement and implementation has to be developed at the school district or university administration level to ensure compliance of such policy at the school or department level (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012). School or higher education administrators can be held accountable for mandatory implementation of induction and mentoring programs at their schools or departments. An annual plan for policy implementation has to be submitted to the district or university human resource director for approval.

#### **Leadership and Culture for Induction and Mentoring**

While implementation of induction and mentoring programs become mandatory, the culture of induction and mentoring program has to be nurtured by the school or department leadership. School or higher education administrators can role-model

inducing and mentoring new faculties by requesting participation of all veteran faculties (Barlin, 2010). A system of award can be developed to encourage volunteers to induct and mentor new faculties. School or higher education administrators can publicize the culture of induction and mentoring program by recognizing the programs to be the pride of the school (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

#### **On the Part of the Mentor**

All veteran faculties at schools or departments are strongly encouraged to participate in the new faculty induction and mentoring programs. Veteran faculties need to feel very proud of having an opportunity to help new faculties as they were once upon a time helped by others when they started their teaching career. It is really an honor for faculties to be entitled as mentors because of their professional achievement and recognition. Veteran faculties play a key role in the success of the induction and mentoring programs in elementary, secondary and higher education (Barlin, 2010).

#### **On the Part of the Mentee**

Induction and mentoring programs in elementary, secondary and higher education cannot be successful without the active participation of the new faculties. They need to join the company of the mentors in the entire faculty family regardless of any mandatory participation policy. As a matter of fact, new faculties are lucky enough to be offered assistance by senior faculty members to ensure their success in the teaching profession. New faculties need to humble themselves so they can take advantage of the induction and mentoring programs to learn the best from the veteran faculties.

#### **Conclusion**

The rate of losing new teachers in the first few years of teaching is beginning to be



worrisome in K-12 education. Retaining highly qualified faculties in higher education is equally difficult. It is a waste of public resources and also a discouragement to all concerned educators. New faculty induction and mentoring programs, based on Deming's Total Quality Management concept and the National Staff Development Council's nine professional development standards, are developed to support new faculties to ensure their success in their beginning years. Successful induction and mentoring programs have to be strongly supported by policy mandates and human resources. New strategies can be initiated to continuously develop the induction and mentoring programs to be more effectively

managed. Educational leaders at K-12 and higher education levels need to disseminate resources in support of meeting the challenges of future development of induction and mentoring programs. The key to successful induction and mentoring programs is in fact the commitment and determination of our educators. Induction and mentoring programs need to be mandatorily implemented to offer needed assistance to new faculties to add strength to the forever developing teaching force. Through effective induction and mentoring programs, elementary, secondary and higher education institutes will successfully increase their faculty retention rate for the benefit of the teaching profession.

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