

Induction and Mentoring Pilot Programme: Primary

Leading Learning in Induction and Mentoring

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Executive summary

Background and methodology

The pilot project, *Leading Learning in Induction and Mentoring*, aimed to develop further understanding of effective induction and mentoring for two key purposes: to trial the *Draft Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programmes and for Mentor Teacher Development in Aotearoa New Zealand (Draft Guidelines)* (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2009) and to subsequently inform national policy on induction. These *Draft Guidelines* were developed to address inconsistencies in the quality of the existing induction system in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The project had two parallel programmes, which, at times, intersected; one was professional development, the other research. The professional development intervention had a whole-school approach to build leadership and mentoring knowledge and capacity. Its purpose was to develop and align schools' Provisionally Registered Teacher (PRT) induction and mentoring programmes with the *Draft Guidelines* and to engage mentors in educative mentoring to support PRT learning and assessment. The second programme addressed four key research questions:

1. What is the role of school leaders and mentor teachers in translating the *Draft Guidelines* into school-based induction programmes?
2. How is PRTs' learning and development supported by leaders during the first two years of their teaching career to meet the *Registered Teacher Criteria* (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2010)?
3. What understandings, attitudes, and skills do educative mentors require to focus PRTs' learning on developing pedagogical expertise?
4. How do assessment practices (both formative and summative) affect confidence in the judgments made about the PRT's ability to meet the *Registered Teacher Criteria*?

The findings summarised

The pilot demonstrated that induction and mentoring programmes are more likely to succeed where school leadership is informed and involved, a principle identified in the *Draft Guidelines*. This pilot showed that this requires leaders to take an active interest in PRTs' knowledge and skill development and to commit to the provision of relevant resources. Furthermore, principals and other school leaders were found to need a focus on professional development to promote pedagogical expertise. In the context of the pilot, pedagogical expertise is having an over-riding concern with student's learning and being constantly alert to developing a repertoire of pedagogical strategies to address this concern.

The pilot confirmed that mentors need to take an educative role in the induction programme, a view supported by the *Draft Guidelines*. It found that, in the absence of education, mentors base their practice on their own beliefs and experiences of mentoring. As a consequence, PRT mentoring is typically affective rather than effective. This limited approach can entrench current ways of teaching rather than inquire into and transform practice. An educative approach to mentoring promotes spending time on effective practices that cause learning for both PRTs and students. Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005) describe educative mentoring as going beyond the quick-fix, "feel-good" support to incorporate a "vision of good teaching", teachers as learners, and the classroom as a site of inquiry. Educative mentoring in the pilot focused on developing pedagogical expertise.

The pilot also found that successfully transferring and sustaining the pilot programme nationwide would require principals to act strategically. Principals would need to:

- first, collaboratively develop and operationalise a school vision of PRT induction and mentoring
- second, give mentors authority to develop PRT programmes and support mentor professional development
- third, communicate the role all teachers have in the development of PRTs.

Furthermore, mentors need to commit to developing educative mentoring practices that focus PRT learning on valued student's learning outcomes. Similarly, PRTs need to commit to evidence-informed learning and aspire to developing pedagogical expertise.

Recommendations

The *Draft Guidelines* and *Registered Teacher Criteria* aim to raise minimum standards of teaching and accommodate a transformative strategic vision for induction and mentoring programmes. The pilot identified a number of challenges that need to be addressed to achieve this. These challenges and their implications are discussed in the body of the report. The following is a summary of recommendations made.

Professional development

It is recommended that:

- relevant professional development for principals and mentors to understand their role and the expectations inherent in the *Draft Guidelines* and *Registered Teacher Criteria* be provided
- consideration be given to developing a mentoring curriculum
- mentors are provided with ongoing research-informed professional development in educative mentoring
- networks of mentors are established to build capacity and provide a pool of mentoring expertise to support ongoing professional development.

Overseas trained teachers

It is recommended that:

- the induction and mentoring support for overseas trained teachers be reviewed.

Information and guidelines

It is recommended that:

- at the time of a PRT appointment, the principal, mentor, and PRT are provided with relevant policy information and guidelines.

Research tool

It is recommended that:

- a tool be developed to measure and analyse the effectiveness of PRT induction and mentoring to provide objective feedback to the New Zealand Teachers Council (the Council) and principals about the strengths and weaknesses of schools' induction and mentoring programmes.

The *Draft Guidelines*

It is recommended that:

- the critical role principals have in providing school cultures to support PRT learning be made explicit
- the roles and expectations of the principal, mentors, and the school staff in supporting PRTs to achieve the *Registered Teacher Criteria* be made explicit and prioritised in the *Draft Guidelines*
- stronger links are made between the *Draft Guidelines* and the *Registered Teacher Criteria*
- include the aim to have a transformative strategic vision for induction and mentoring programmes and practices that go beyond advice and guidance, as proposed in the *Draft Guidelines*

- the role of release teachers for mentors and PRTs in the induction and mentoring programme be recognised and clarified.

PRT assessment

It is recommended that:

- the sector works towards establishing one set of standards for teachers
- negotiations be initiated to resolve the tensions between the New Zealand Educational Institute competency employment agreement and the intent of the Council *Draft Guidelines* and *Registered Teacher Criteria* as aspirational frameworks for continued professional learning
- the expectations of principals, mentors, and PRTs with regard to formative and summative assessment of PRTs be clarified
- ways for principals and mentor teachers to access targeted and assessment-focused educative induction and mentoring professional development be explored
- benchmark exemplars of *Registered Teacher Criteria* standards be developed
- the sector works towards developing moderation policy and practices to achieve greater consistency in the quality of PRTs recommended for full registration.