THE ROLE OF TRUST IN DEVELOPING TEACHER LEADERS THROUGH EARLY-CAREER INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAMS

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Development and retention of novice teachers are critical, because teachers' quality and abilities are the most significant school-based factors contributing to student achievement and educational improvement (Cochran-Smith, 2006). However, many beginning teachers abandon the profession in their initial two to five years of employment; in some cases, even in their first year (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2009). Correspondingly, many scholars (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2003; Strong, 2005) claim that greater efforts should focus on induction programs with effective mentoring opportunities during the early teaching years, as such programs and opportunities are capable of reducing early-career attrition and positively affect teacher retention and student achievement. Furthermore, we believe it is insufficient for new teachers to focus solely on how to survive in the profession, but rather on how to thrive and develop into teacher-leaders.

In this conceptual paper, we analyze the role of trust in developing successful mentoring relationships within induction programs. As such, we emphasize the three domains, or tridimensionality, of trust, which pertain to trust shared between: (a) protégé and mentor, (b) mentor and school administrator, and (c) protégé and school administrator. We believe that establishing, maintaining, and sustaining collaborative and trusting relationships across these dimensions not only contribute to retention of teachers, but, more importantly, promote the development of teacher leadership among the neophyte educational professionals.

Teacher Induction and Mentoring

Teachers who feel ineffective or unsupported in the early years often abandon teaching. While a certain level of attrition is necessary and healthy (Ingersoll, 2001), early-career loss of teachers is neither desirable nor sustainable, as it is costly to schools and detrimental to student learning (Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006). Induction programs and high-quality mentoring programs designed to curb the attrition can have positive impacts through increased teacher effectiveness, higher satisfaction, commitment, improved classroom instruction and student achievement, and early-career retention of novice teachers (Glazerman et al., 2010; Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011; Richardson, Glessner, & Tolson, 2010). Defined as the process of forming a mutually supportive and learning relationship between the more experienced (mentor) and less experienced (protégé) colleagues (Daresh & Playko, 1995), early-career teacher mentoring can be an effective support when used in conjunction with other components of the induction process (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wong, 2004a). However, issues such as failure to appropriately match mentor with mentee, unsuccessful new teacher/

mentor dyads, lack of willing and/or able mentors, lack of mentor training, or individual factors (e.g., burnout, lack of professional respect, distrust) may result in failed efforts (Johnson & Kardos, 2005).

The Tridimensional Role of Trust in Mentorship

Through our research, we have defined trust as the extent to which one engages in a reciprocal interaction and a relationship in such a way that there is willingness to be vulnerable to another and to assume risk with positive expectations and a degree of confidence that the other party will possess some semblance of benevolence, care, competence, honesty, openness, reliability, respect, hope, and wisdom (Walker, Kutsyuruba & Noonan, 2011). Trust creates a school environment where individuals share a moral commitment to act in the interests of collectivity (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

Trust is the cornerstone of the relationships. In essence, mentorship is a form of relationship based on having a *critical friend*, a trusted person who may ask provocative questions, provide data to be examined through another lens, and/or critique a person's work (Costa & Kallick, 1993). Mentorship within teacher induction programs usually encompasses a relational dyad between a protégé and a mentor. To date, research into the development of a trusting relationship between the mentor and protégé has centered on this dimension, pointing out that the bond of trust and trustworthiness must exist between a mentor and a new teacher if such dyad is to succeed (Doerger, 2003). Within mentor-protégé relationships, trust allows the protégé to seek, truly hear, and choose to act on the advice of the mentor without fear of rejection. In turn, the mentor develops a level of confidence in the protégé, which, in turn, encourages active support.

Less researched, yet as important, are the other two dimensions of trust, namely, between administrator and mentor and administrator and protégé. Although administrators do not directly participate in the dyadic relationship between the mentor and protégé, their involvement is about providing teachers with orientation and resources, assigning and supporting mentors, and developing professional cultures supportive of new teachers. Supportive and trusted relationships between all participants in the mentoring process are "paramount to successfully assist novice teachers in adjusting to teaching requirements" (Smith, 2002, p. 47). Researchers found that trusting relationships between school administrators and individual teachers appear to enhance a healthy school climate and student outcomes. In contrast, unsupportive or negative interaction may cause the teacher to feel dissatisfied, leave the teaching profession, and move to a different school (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010; Guarino et al., 2006). Karsenti and Collin (2013) found that it was a lack of trust between the administration and the new teacher that led to the novice teachers' decision to leave the profession. Other scholars (Cherian & Daniel, 2008; Wood, 2005) observed that staff morale is improved and the beginning teachers' self-concept is strengthened when administrators serve as the builders of the school culture, exhibit supportive and shared leadership, create the opportunity for shared values and vision, and promote professional relationships among novice teachers and experienced teachers. When new teachers belong to professional learning communities that are based on high-

quality interpersonal relationships founded on trust, respect, and collaboration, they not only remain in teaching but grow professionally by becoming reflective thinkers and co-learners (Kochan & Trimble, 2000; Wong, 2004a; Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007). We add, they also become teacher leaders.

Implications for Teacher Leadership

Today's education calls for leadership to be present at every level of the school structure (Danielson, 2007). Therefore, enhancement of teacher quality and development of teacher leadership are important factors in overall school improvement efforts (Harris, 2004). Wong (2004b) argued that effective teacher leadership development is achieved through a structured, sustained, intensive professional development program that allows new teachers to observe others, to be observed by others, and to be part of networks or study groups. Within this context, all teachers share together, grow together, learn to respect one another's work, and collaboratively become leaders together. When mentorship is an integral component of a structured induction program, it promotes leadership through collaborative culture based on mutual trust. Through a dynamic interplay of respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity, mutual trust creates an environment of moral commitment to collective leadership development (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). When trust is nurtured, practiced, and valued, teachers are not isolated in their work, are prone to share in collective responsibilities for student success, and experience higher morale and lower absenteeism (Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2009). We conclude that the tridimensional collaborative and trusting relationships are necessary for teacher induction and mentoring programs to not only help beginning teachers survive the first years of teaching but also thrive and develop into school leaders. In turn, it is hoped that these new leaders, will maintain and sustain effective mentoring relationships through future trust brokering.

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