



(re)Designing Responsive and Sustainable Mentorship

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The New Teacher Mentoring Project vision

The NTMP is committed to building a mentoring culture within all BC school districts that welcomes and retains BC teachers new to the profession, provides for continuity of teachers' embedded professional learning, and reinvigorates teaching and learning communities.

Terms of reference

New teacher induction—Induction is the broad term which includes all support, guidance, development, and orientation efforts (including mentoring) provided to new teachers as they undertake the responsibilities of teaching practice. Induction includes the many formal and informal ways new teachers enter the profession.

Mentorship—Building relationships whereby experienced colleagues provide dedicated time to guide, support, give feedback, and facilitate evidence-informed learning conversations with colleagues new to the profession, to an assignment, or to a community. Mentoring is a central component of induction.

New teachers—Teachers new to the profession are considered to be those within the first five years of practice (including TTOCs, and teachers with either temporary or continuing assignments).

Note: The scope of the NTMP has grown to include teachers new to the profession, new to role, and new to community, in response to the diversity of mentorship purposes across the province.

NTMP principles

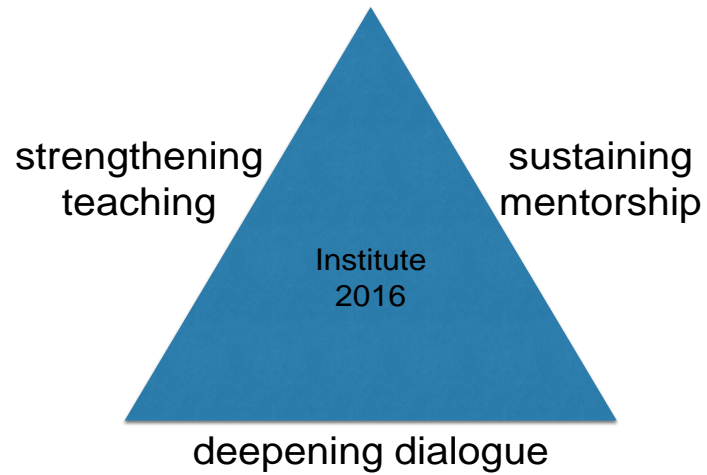
- research informed
- responsive to geographic and cultural diversity
- non-evaluative, voluntary, growth-oriented participation
- partnership among stakeholders
- inquiry lens
- trust in the teaching profession to be self-directed and collaborative learners.

NTMP beliefs

The frameworks and processes developed within the New Teacher Mentoring Project are founded upon the following beliefs about the professional lives of early career teachers:

- The work of a teacher is complex and challenging, and professional learning needs to be continuous and responsive to the changing contexts of teacher work.
- New teachers contribute fresh ideas and innovative practices that rejuvenate teaching workplaces.
- Including new teachers in communities of practice allows them to develop a sense of professional self and a sense of belonging within the profession.
- New teachers seek evidence-based, formative and progressive feedback on their developing practice within a trusting relationship.
- Inquiry into practice in the company of colleagues is a core process of teacher growth.

Reflections on trends, truths, and tensions of BC mentorship



(Re-) Designing responsive sustainable mentorship

The framework below provides key topics to guide your team through the conception, development and implementation of a responsive and sustainable model of mentorship.

Supplementary materials can be found at mentoringbc.ca (*Mentor Leader Resources*). These can be adapted and edited for your purposes.



Guiding questions to consider

Focus	Guiding Questions
Forming the design team	<p>Who are the representatives from administration, union, district staff, principal and teacher groups needed on the team?</p> <p>What can individuals commit and what skills do they bring? What skills need to be added/developed?</p> <p>Who will co-ordinate the team?</p>
Understanding context and culture	<p>What are the significant aspects of our community and place that influence teachers' sense of belonging?</p> <p>What are our beliefs about professional learning?</p> <p>What are our district strengths and constraints?</p>
Identifying purpose and principles	<p>What is the team's collective understanding of the purpose of mentorship within our district?</p> <p>What professional values and teaching dispositions will mentorship foster?</p> <p>How can mentorship enhance the efficacy, well-being, and effectiveness of teachers in the district?</p> <p>What are the principles that ground this mentorship initiative? (e.g., non-evaluative, voluntary, etc.)</p>
Investment	<p>What are the committed sources of funding?</p> <p>What are possible other sources of providing teacher release/sanctioned time for mentorship?</p> <p>How will we build and value the importance of mentorship to professional learning?</p>
Seeking and supporting new teachers	<p>Who are the 'new' teachers this initiative will support? What are their learning needs and preferred learning styles?</p> <p>What are our expectations of the new teachers?</p> <p>How can we best communicate with these teachers in actual and virtual spaces?</p> <p>How can we enable networking and peer support among new teachers?</p>
Seeking and supporting mentors	<p>What are the skills, dispositions we value in our mentors?</p> <p>How will we recruit mentors?</p> <p>How will we facilitate mentors' learning and growth? How will we demonstrate appreciation of mentors' knowledge and contribution?</p>
Designing a model	<p>What model best serves our purpose at this time?</p> <p>In what ways can the mentorship initiative align with other professional learning groups and teams active within the district?</p> <p>In what ways can technology be integrated to enable and enhance our initiative?</p>
Formative feedback	<p>What processes of formative assessment will be used to gather feedback from new teachers, mentors, and the design team?</p> <p>How do we differentiate to ensure honest feedback?</p> <p>What does the feedback tell us about what is working and what needs to change?</p> <p>How can we communicate assessment data throughout the district?</p>

Forming the design team

- Who are the representatives from administration, union, district staff, principals, and teachers needed on the team?
- What can individuals commit and what skills do they bring? What skills need to be added/developed?
- Who will co-ordinate the team?

Where are we? What do we know?	What are our questions and areas of focus?

“Collaboration with all stakeholders is critical. Strong co-communication and collaboration among stakeholders, including administration, school boards, union leadership, and professional partners, creates a culture of commitment and ensures success.” (New Teacher Center, 2007)

Understanding context and culture

- What are the significant aspects of our community and place that influence teachers' sense of belonging?
- What are our beliefs about professional learning?
- What are our district strengths and constraints?

Where are we? What do we know?	What are our questions and areas of focus?

"Apprenticeship is not so much a matter of acquiring skills as it is a process of gradually moving from the edges to the centre of a community of practice." (Lave and Wenger, 1991)

"Decades of research confirm the power of school context to shape what teachers do and what they learn. Across this body of scholarship, collaboration stands out as a key variable. (Ingersoll,R.&Smith,T. Do teacher induction and mentoring matter? NASSP Bulletin 88 ,638. 2004)

Identifying purpose and principles

- What is the team’s collective understanding of the purpose of mentorship within our district?
- What professional values and teaching dispositions will mentorship foster?
- How can mentorship enhance the efficacy, well-being, and effectiveness of teachers in the district?
- What are the principles that ground this mentorship initiative? (e.g., non-evaluative, voluntary, etc.)

Where are we? What do we know?	What are our questions and areas of focus?

“New Teacher programs cannot be preparing teachers for mere survival in the complex and demanding world of today’s schools. Instead, these programs must also have as part of their vision a new image of the successful teacher whose leadership capacity is developed from the moment the teacher enters a classroom.” (Moir, E. and Glass, J. Quality Induction: An Investment in Teachers. Teacher Education Quarterly, 109-114, Winter 2001)

Investment

- What are the committed sources of funding?
- What are possible other sources of providing teacher release/sanctioned time for mentorship?
- How will we build and value the importance of mentorship to professional learning?

Where are we? What do we know?	What are our questions and areas of focus?

Seeking and supporting new teachers

- Who are the 'new' teachers this initiative will support? What are their learning needs and preferred learning styles?
- What are our expectations of the new teachers?
- How can we best communicate with these teachers in actual and virtual spaces?
- How can we enable networking and peer support among new teachers?

Where are we? What do we know?	What are our questions and areas of focus?

"We outline the importance of not viewing beginning teachers as a homogenized group without the necessary skills to teach. We suggest viewing them as teachers who are beginning and seeing them as full of potential, possibility, ideas and as learning to live their lives as teachers. This allows us to think about them as individuals with agency to negotiate support networks, mentorship and contexts." (Clandinin J. et al. (University of Alberta). Early Career Teacher Attrition: Problems, Possibilities, Potentials, 2012)

Seeking and supporting mentors

- What are the skills and dispositions we value in our mentors?
- How will we recruit mentors?
- How will we facilitate mentor's learning and growth?
- How will we demonstrate appreciation of mentors' knowledge and contribution?

Where are we? What do we know?	What are our questions and areas of focus?

"New teachers become reflective thinkers and co-learners if the mentoring environment is based on collaboration". (Clandinin J. et al. (University of Alberta). Early Career Teacher Attrition: Problems, Possibilities, Potentials, 2012)

"We need other people to show us, to accompany us, to hold the hope and steady our faith that we will make it. And we also need people with whom to practice: parents, friends, children, teachers. For in relationships, we both form and heal what we come again and again to name our self. This is why mentors and mentoring environments play such a key role. Without adequate support many learners...may decide to stay where they are." (Larent A. Daloz, 2012)

Designing a model

- What model best serves our purpose at this time?
- In what ways can the mentorship initiative align with other professional learning groups and teams active within the district?
- In what ways can technology be integrated to enable and enhance our initiative?

Where are we? What do we know?	What are our questions and areas of focus?

Formative feedback

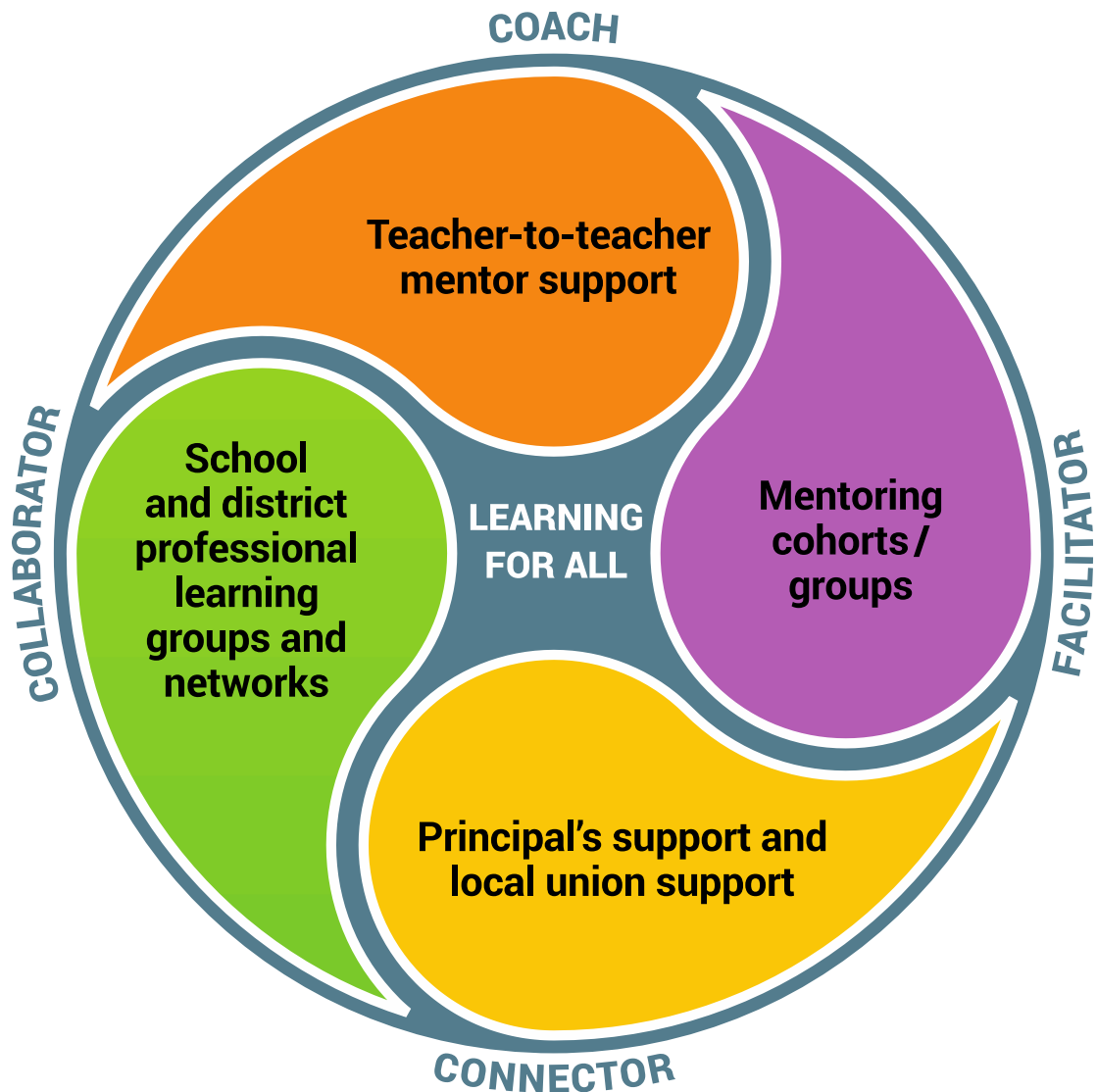
- What processes of formative assessment will be used to gather feedback from new teachers, mentors, and the design team?
- How do we differentiate to ensure honest feedback?
- What does the feedback tell us about what is working and what needs to change?
- How can we communicate assessment data and feedback throughout the district?

Where are we? What do we know?	What are our questions and areas of focus?

“Program leaders must pay attention to their mentors and new teachers; they must assume responsibility for supporting mentors in gathering and collecting data, making their work public, and regularly assessing their effectiveness. This sort of accountability transcends compliance and moves toward a cycle of continuous improvement – the essence of any strong induction program that seeks to accelerate new teacher effectiveness.”
Moir, E. Accelerating Teacher Effectiveness: Lessons Learned from Two Decades of New Teacher Induction. Kappan (October 2009)

District/local team action plan

Goals	Actions	Who?	Time



GROWING A CULTURE OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR INDUCTION AND MENTORSHIP

Figure 1 – a conceptual framework for growing a culture of collective responsibility for induction and mentorship within a district/local.

Mentoring cycle

Adapted from Lois Zachary, *The mentoring Guide*, 2nd Edition, San Francisco, 2012

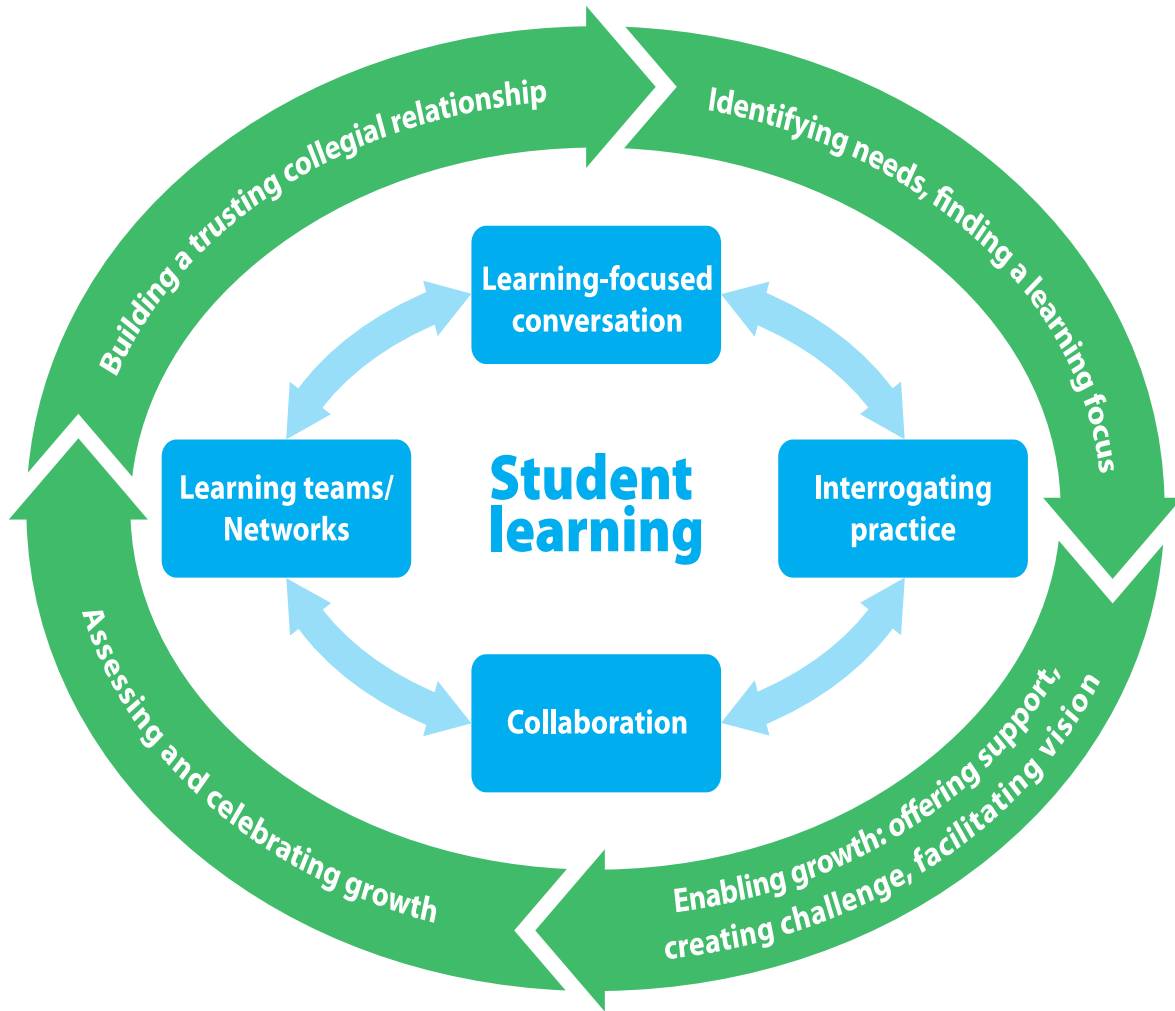


Figure 2 – a model describing the development of a professional mentoring relationship (in green) and the key processes (in blue) integral to formal growth-focused peer mentorship.

Resources to support mentorship development

The NTMP Provincial Mentorship Resource Team

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Websites

mentoringbc.ca
teachbc.bctf.ca

newteachercenter.org/
resultscoachingglobal.com/blog/

Resources

Contacts

3 Actions you will take towards sustaining mentorship, strengthening teaching, deepening dialogue

2 People you will engage to support your efforts

1 Risk you can take