
Mentoring in the New Millennium

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ALL PROFESSIONAL WORK IS COMPLEX AND demanding. Poor professional judgment can result in a patient's death, buildings falling down, or people giving up on their own learning. The idea that new professionals should have mentors to guide them through developing the skills and managing the stresses of their work has become increasingly accepted. In teaching, for example, induction and mentoring programs have become widespread; however, their implementation has often been disappointing.

Mentoring practice may fall short of its ideals not because of poor policies or program design but because we fail to regard mentoring as integral to our approach to teaching and professionalism. Mentoring of new teachers will never reach its potential unless it is guided by a deeper conceptualization that treats it as central to the task of transforming the teaching profession itself.

In this article, we pursue this challenge in three ways. First, we link approaches to mentoring with an evolutionary model of professionalism in teaching—what we call the four ages of professionalism. Second, we extend this analysis to examine key areas of change that should lead us to look at mentoring differently as we enter the new millennium. Third, we draw conclusions for redesigning teacher preparation, developing continuous learning throughout the career, and changing the teaching profession more fundamentally.

The Four Ages of Professionalism

Hargreaves (in press) outlines four broad historical phases of the changing nature of teachers' professionalism: (a) the pre-professional age, (b) the age of the autonomous professional, (c) the age of the collegial professional, and (d) the fourth professional age.

The pre-professional age

Public education began as a factory-like system of mass education. The most common teaching methods were recitation or lecturing, along with note taking, question and answer, and seat work (Cuban, 1984). In this preprofessional age, teaching was seen as managerially demanding but technically simple. Its principles and parameters were treated as unquestioned common sense. One learned to be a

teacher through practical apprenticeship and improved by trial-and-error. The "good teacher" demonstrated loyalty and garnered personal reward through service.

In this view, good teachers are enthusiastic people who "know their stuff" and how to "get it across," and can keep order in their classes. They learn to teach by watching others, first as students, then as student teachers. In a pre-professional image of teaching, teachers need little training or ongoing professional learning. They learn refinements on the job within the confines of the classroom, which they control. Mentoring is reduced to a few words of encouragement and management "tips" offered in the staff room: otherwise new teachers are on their own. This is scarcely mentoring at all.

The age of the autonomous professional

Beginning in the 1960s, the status of teachers in many countries improved significantly, compared to the preprofessional age. In this period, the terms *professional* and *autonomy* became increasingly inseparable among teachers. One of the overriding characteristics of teaching was its individualism. Most teachers taught their classes in isolation, separated from their colleagues. In the 1970s and 1980s, individualism and isolation were identified as widespread features of the culture of teaching (Rosenholtz, 1989).

Professional autonomy enhanced the status of teaching as the amount of preparation was lengthened and salaries rose. But professional autonomy also inhibited innovation. Few innovations moved beyond adoption to successful implementation (Fullan, 1991). The benefits of in-service education seldom became integrated into classroom practice, as individual course-goers returned to schools of unenthusiastic colleagues who had not shared the learning with them. Pedagogy stagnated as teachers were reluctant or unable to stand out from their colleagues.

Although induction and mentoring programs began to be introduced in a profession that was now acknowledged as being difficult, the surrounding culture of individualism meant that helping relationships in a school were confined to new mentoring. The message was that only novices or incompetents needed help. The rest of the teaching staff could manage by themselves. When help was associated with weakness, new teachers sought to extricate themselves from it as fast as they could (Little, 1990). The age of professional autonomy provided teachers with poor preparation for coping

with the changes heading their way and against which their classroom doors would offer little protection.

The age of the collegial professional

By the mid-1980s, individual teacher autonomy was becoming unsustainable as a way of responding to the increased complexities of schooling. The persistence of individualism in teaching meant that teachers' responses to the challenges 'they faced were ad hoc-uncoordinated with the efforts of their colleagues and based on their own personal knowledge and skill.

At the same time, pressure to create collaborative cultures was growing due to the knowledge explosion, the widening of curriculum demands, the increasing range of special education students in ordinary classes, and the accelerating pace of change. Teaching was becoming even more difficult and complex, and efforts to build cultures of collaboration were increasing.

In these cultures, teachers develop common purpose, cope with uncertainty, respond to rapid change, create a climate of risk taking, and develop stronger senses of teacher efficacy. Ongoing learning cultures replace patterns of staff development that are individualized, episodic, and weakly connected to the priorities of the school (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996). The implications for initial teacher education, ongoing professional learning, and mentoring in particular include:

- Teachers learn to teach in new ways.
- Professional learning is seen as a continuous process, grappling with complex and evolving issues.
- Continuous learning is both an individual responsibility and an institutional obligation.
- Professional learning is not to be found in a choice between school-based and course-based modes of provision but in an active integration of and synergy between the two.
- Collegial professionalism means working with, learning from, and teaching colleagues.
- Teaching must be framed and informed by professional standards of practice that define what good teachers should know and be able to do and what qualities and dispositions they should possess to care for and connect with their students.

The fourth professional age

As we enter the 21st century, the world is undergoing profound social, economic, political, and cultural transformations. The social geography of post modernity is one where boundaries between institutions are dissolving, roles are becoming less seg-

regated, and borders are becoming increasingly irrelevant. What's "out there" is now "in here," and this has fundamental implications for teachers and administrators (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). Teaching, for example, requires learning to work with more diverse communities and seeing parents as sources of learning and support rather than interference.

Not only are the social geographies of schooling changing in ways that blur the boundaries between schools and the world outside, but the social geographies of professional learning are also changing. There is more access to networks of professional learning. The content of professional learning needs to become wider and deeper. It needs to encompass working with parents, becoming assessment literate, keeping up with scientific breakthroughs in the pedagogy of learning, rekindling the purpose and passion of teaching, and working with others to bring about positive reforms in education. All of this is occurring in the midst of intense pressure and contradictory trends of centralization and school-based management.

We are on the edge of an age of post-modern professionalism, where teachers deal with a diverse clientele and increasing moral uncertainty, where many approaches are possible and more and more groups have an influence. Will this age see positive new partnerships being created with groups and institutions beyond the school and teachers learning to work openly and authoritatively with those partners? Or will it witness the deprofessionalisation of teaching as teachers crumble under multiple pressures, intensified work demands, and reduced opportunities to learn from colleagues? Mentoring is embedded and embroiled in these developments.

No potentially powerful intervention, and mentoring is certainly one of them, can be treated independently of the evolving nature of society and the teaching profession within it. In order to meet the challenges of the post-modern age, mentoring must be guided by and linked to an overarching appreciation that, for better or worse, we are on the brink of redefining the teaching profession.

Challenges in the New Millennium

In any complex occupation, new entrants need someone who can "show them the ropes," develop their competence and understanding, and help them fit in. Even experienced practitioners can benefit from having the advice, support, and role modelling of colleagues. Teaching is no exception. After decades of assuming that teachers teach alone and get better only through their own individual trial and error, there is increasing commitment to the idea that all teachers are more effective when they can learn from and be supported by a strong community of colleagues. While new teachers can benefit greatly

from a mentor, mentors also learn from their protégés-developing new insights into their own and others' teaching, new relationships, and a renewal of enthusiasm and commitment to their craft and career.

Good mentoring is not accomplished easily. An expanding research literature has addressed the key issues surrounding it-the selection of mentors, how mentors and protégés are assigned or matched to each other, how formal or informal the relationship should be, how mentors should be rewarded for their contribution, and where the time for mentoring can be found (Little, 1990). While this article is mindful of these enduring issues, we want to push the debate further. We ask not what the needs and issues of mentoring are in general but how we might challenge and extend the role of the mentor in a world where the very nature of teaching is undergoing profound changes. What are the challenges to mentoring at the beginning of a new millennium? In the following sections, we outline key areas of change that will push educators to look at mentoring differently in the post-modern age.

Mentors, not tormentors

As we have argued, teaching has become incredibly more complex over the past few years. The breadth of teachers' classroom repertoires is expanding because of developments in the science of teaching (e.g., constructivism, cooperative learning, and assessment strategies), the spread of information technologies, and the challenge of adapting instruction to the needs and learning styles of students from diverse backgrounds and with special needs. These developments pose challenges for new and experienced teachers alike. The old model of mentoring, where experts who are certain about their craft can pass on its principles to eager novices, no longer applies.

Although it is possible to find a few teachers who are conversant and comfortable with the wide range of new teaching strategies, these individuals are a scarce resource and can quickly become overburdened. The reality in many schools today is that while assigned mentors may know more than new teachers about certain areas such as school procedure or classroom management, the new teacher may sometimes know more than the mentor about new teaching strategies. If the school assumes the mentor always knows best, even about teaching strategies, innovative new teachers might quickly experience the mentor relationship as an oppressive one. Mentors may seem more like tormentors, and the process of induction into the profession may amount to seduction (from the Latin, *seducere*, to lead aside) of the new teachers away from the purposes and practices they recently acquired in their teacher preparation experiences (Hargreaves & Jacka, 1995).

Cochran-Smith and Paris (1995) recommend that new and experienced teachers work on and inquire into the problems of teaching and learning in a situation where everyone acknowledges that teaching is inherently difficult and even "experts" do not have easy answers. This also means that the mentor relationship should not be the only helping relationship in a school. In a job that is inherently complex and difficult, everyone needs help, not just the incompetent teacher or the novice.

Support as well as standards

Another issue in the future of mentoring concerns teachers' increasing needs for emotional support. Teaching is an emotional practice (Hargreaves, 1998). It arouses and colours feelings in teachers and those they teach. Teaching involves not only instructing students but also caring for and forming relationships with them. With the children of many of today's post-modern families (Elkind, 1997)-families that often are fractured, poor, single-parented-this burden of caring is becoming even greater. Teachers are repeatedly putting their selves on the line. Times of rapid change, whether chosen or imposed, can create even greater anxiety and insecurity among teachers as the challenge of learning new strategies calls their competence and confidence into question.

In the drive to standardize teaching-to define and demarcate it through graded benchmarks of knowledge and competence-it is easy to lose sight of teaching's emotional dimension, of the enthusiasm, passion, and dedication that make many teachers great. Emotion energizes teaching but can also drain it. Thus, emotional support is one of the strongest needs of beginning teachers (Tickle, 1991). In today's demanding classrooms, experienced teachers also need this kind of support-to talk through their emotions, manage their anxieties and frustrations, and be guided and reassured about the limits to the care they can provide when guilt threatens to overwhelm them (Hargreaves, 1994).

Mentorship, therefore, involves more than guiding protégés through learning standards and skill sets and extends to providing strong and continuous emotional support. Just as emotional support for high school students should be the responsibility of all teachers, and not just one or two guidance counsellors, support for teachers should not fall to a few designated mentors but extend across the entire school community.

Communities as well as classrooms

A change force in teaching in the post-modern age is the way in which increased accountability, school choice, and cultural changes in families and communities are making teachers connect more with people and groups beyond the school-people who increasingly affect the world within it (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). Connecting with what's

"out there" means teachers' work and relationships are extending beyond the classroom to help their students within it. It means working more and more with adults as well as children and facing one's fears to work more closely with those whom teachers might once have seen as their greatest adversaries and critics.

Good mentorship involves helping teachers work effectively with adults-being sure (as a professional community) of their own judgments while also being open and responsive to the opinions of others. Teachers have important things to learn from parents and other community members-about the particular children they teach and sometimes (for instance, in relation to information technology) about ways to teach them. Teachers are not always the experts and working effectively with other adults means they will sometimes be the ones who are learning not teaching. As Wailer (1932) wryly observed in his classic text. *The Sociology of Teaching*:

Parent-teacher work has usually been directed at securing for the school the support of parents that is at getting parents to see children more or less as teachers see them. But it would be a sad day for childhood if parent-teacher work ever really succeeded in its object. (p. 69)

Dealing with the demographics

The imminent change in the demographics of teaching will require us to rethink how mentoring is recognized in schools. Teachers recruited in the 1960s and '70s to educate the baby-boomer generation are now approaching or already entering retirement. In the next 5 years, the teaching force in many countries will undergo a massive demographic renewal with large numbers of young teachers entering the profession for the first time.

Beginning teachers have often been isolated instances in their schools with many experienced teachers as their mentors. These mentors have been able to induct the new teachers into the existing culture of the school. Indeed the evidence is that in such conditions, especially when employment in teaching has been insecure, beginning teachers quickly conform to the existing culture (Schemp, Sparkes & Templin. 1993).

This will soon be reversed, with large cohorts of experienced teachers and mentors retiring. Young teachers will form large groups in many schools-to a point where they may begin to develop a new cultural dynamic. This shift creates a massive opportunity for innovation and renewal. It also carries risks of misdirected energy and excesses of error. Without strong leadership, the schools could be balkanized into older and younger teachers, where each group excludes and devalues the contributions of the other. In these circumstances the challenge for a dwindling group of mentors or lead teachers may not be to

counsel individuals. The challenge will be to bring together the cultures of youth and experience. This will involve harnessing the energies that new teachers bring to the system without marginalizing the perspectives and wisdom of teachers whose knowledge and experience have deep roots in the past.

These are just a few of the challenges facing teaching and mentoring in a new century. They indicate that mentoring must become less hierarchical less individualistic, more wide-ranging, and more inclusive in its orientation than it has been viewed in the past.

New Approaches to Mentoring

Teacher induction programs are becoming widespread. Among teachers with up to 3 years experience surveyed during 1993-94, 56.4 percent indicated they participated in an induction program (NASSP, 1999). There is a growing body of resources on how to select train, and support mentors; how to set goals and assess outcomes; and how to define and spread best practices in mentoring (see NASSP. 1999 and the other articles in this theme issue of TIP).

We believe many of these mentoring programs will fall short of their potential however because of a failure to realize that they must be integrated with other developments in policy and practice that are required to transform the teaching profession. In the same way that we have seen site-based management fail to realize its potential, any formal mentoring policy can easily degenerate into acts of restructuring (adding formal roles) with out reculturing (altering the capacity of teachers).

We have identified three strategic approaches for developing mentoring programs that can make a lasting difference. First, we can conceptualize and design mentoring programs so that they are explicitly seen as instruments of school reculturing. This means that all those involved must work on the deeper meaning of mentoring, seeing mentoring as a way of preparing teachers to become effective change agents who are committed to making a difference in the lives of young people and are skilled at the pedagogical and partnership developments that make success with students possible. Mentoring in this sense becomes not just a way of supporting individual teachers but also a device to help build strong professional cultures of teaching in our schools, dedicated to improving teaching, learning, and caring.

Second, mentoring must be explicitly connected to other reform components in transforming the teaching profession. Mentoring must address the needs of all teachers new to the district or school, not just beginning teachers. It must be linked to the redesign of initial teacher education and ongoing school improvement.

At the University of Toronto, for example, we are

implementing teacher preparation programs that have three design components: cohorts of students (up to 60), teams of school and university faculty (up to 6 on a team), and sets of partner schools (up to 10) in which subgroups of student interns work. In this way, schools of education see themselves as in the business of school improvement as well as teacher education, and schools see themselves as in the business of teacher education as well as school improvement.

Furthermore, induction and the continuous development of teachers and administrators must build on the efforts of initial teacher education. All of these must be guided by standards of practice aligned with the concepts of good teaching required for what we earlier called the emerging realities of the post modern age. Mentoring, in this sense, is viewed not only as an integral part of development and improvement efforts within the school but part of an entire system of training, development, and improvement beyond the school.

Third, all those involved directly and indirectly in teacher mentoring must realize they are looking at a vital window of opportunity to recreate the profession. The next few years will be a defining era for the teaching profession (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). Will it become a force for society change and social justice? Can it develop its own visions of educational and social change, instead of reacting to the change agendas of others? Make no mistake about it. Those entering teaching at the turn of the millennium are entering at a time when the future of the profession is at stake. As we have stated previously (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998):

Getting "out there" means addressing the public perception that the profession of teaching does not monitor itself. It means engaging with external constituencies in establishing standards of performance. It means becoming a force for societal development. Recreating the profession is a collective quest. But it begins with you and thousands of colleagues like you making individual contributions of your own. (pp. 104-105)

Conclusion

Mentoring is a means to a larger end: that of creating a strong, improvement-oriented profession in schools, professional associations, and teacher unions. As this challenge is addressed we should see mentoring move in the following directions:

- from being performed in pairs to becoming an integral part of professional cultures in schools,
- from focusing only on classroom work with students to developing the ability to form strong relationships with colleagues and parents as well,
- from hierarchical dispensations of wisdom to

shared inquiries into practice,

- from being an isolated innovation to becoming an integrated part of broader improvement efforts to reculture our schools and school systems.

These are some of the key challenges for mentoring at the turn of the millennium. The goal is not to create high quality mentor programs as ends in themselves but rather to incorporate mentoring as part of transforming teaching into a true learning profession.

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**This pre-reading material is provided in preparation for the
Day 1 Mentor Training Workshop.**

The following questions have been included to assist your reflections.

1. The authors describe the age of '***the autonomous professional***'. (page 1)

What were the 'blockers' of mentoring in this age?

Are there vestiges remaining in our schools some forty years later?

2. '***The old model of mentoring, where experts who are certain about their craft can pass on its principles to eager novices, no longer applies***'. (page 3)

Are you surprised at this comment?

Do you agree with it?

3. The key issues surrounding mentoring as identified by Hargreaves and Fullan are:

'The selection of mentors, how mentors and protégés are assigned or matched with each other

How formal or informal the relationship should be

How mentors should be rewarded for their contribution

Where the time for mentoring can be found'. (page 3)

Is this a complete list?

What are the issues in your school ?

How have you managed to overcome such issues?

4. Hargreaves and Fullan identify '***three strategic approaches for developing mentoring programs***'. (pages 5 and 6)

Does this thinking resonate with your experiences?