Mentor-Reflective Theory in Teacher Onboarding

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ABSTRACT

Effective mentoring is paramount for the development of 21st-century teachers, shaping their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and career progression. This research employs Corbin and Strauss's (2015) Grounded Theory approach, a qualitative methodology systematically generating theory from empirical data. Aligned with the study's deductive approach, Padua's deductive axiomatic technique underpins theory development. Three axioms are identified: (1) Professional development enhances novice teachers' pedagogical strategies and confidence; (2) Mentorship enriches mentor leadership through structured training and observation; (3) Structured induction supports novice teachers' pedagogical advancement. These axioms yield five key assertions: (1) Professional development readies novice teachers; (2) Mentoring refines novice teachers' skills; (3) Reflective mentoring imparts organizational values and norms; (4) Teacher mentoring influences self-efficacy and job satisfaction; (5) This culminates in the Mentor-Reflective Theory for Teacher Onboarding, emphasizing the professional growth of new educators.

Keywords: beginning teachers; deductive axiomatic; grounded theory; mentor-reflective theory; teacher mentoring program

1. Introduction

Mentorship's is importance in promoting teachers' professional growth and enhancing student results has been increasingly acknowledged in recent years. Not all instructors are originally equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to foster an atmosphere favorable

to learning. Supplying teachers with fair chances for professional development is crucial for increasing their teaching abilities and overall effectiveness (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). They may have the motivation and zeal to assume the teaching job, but they need sufficient supervision and support to perform appropriately. Mentoring programs for new teachers may influence teacher retention and student progress.

Successful mentoring is founded on the interaction between leaders and followers and serves as a framework for analyzing each scenario based on the mentor's guidance and direction, the amount of socio-emotional support supplied, and the degree of preparation of the mentee. In describing the growth of the mentor-mentee relationship, Kram (1983) defined stages such as introduction, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. In addition, Villar and Cavanagh (2013) believe that professional learning communities may give instructors the necessary support and tools to improve their teaching methods and promote student learning. In addition, school administrators implement an extensive onboarding mentoring program for teacher preparation to give teachers the essential skills, tools, and support to accomplish their roles in the classroom efficiently. This strategy is reinforced by Darling-Hammond et al. (2009), who underlined the necessity of providing instructors with chances for professional development to enhance their teaching abilities and overall effectiveness.

Teachers can inspire their students. Not only are they necessary to develop learners' cognitive abilities, but they also have the potential to change the course of their life. There are a lot of stories that can witness the benefits of having a solid connection between a teacher and a student. Even the most competent teachers might need more motivation in their jobs. Even with all their enthusiasm and commitment, these teachers will require guidance from their supervisors. They still need to be reminded of why they are acting the way they are. They continue to require the necessary mentoring and coaching that they are due.

Teachers' competencies in the twenty-first century may be separated into three categories based on various scholars' achievements: knowledge competencies, skill competencies, and attitudes competencies. Professional knowledge, educational expertise, social skill, and other competencies were also essential in the previous century.

Teachers need to possess many different types of competencies. This article aims to construct a theory that addresses the competencies teachers need to have in the 21st century so that teachers may take ownership of their abilities and perform at a high level. There are a variety of strategies that may be used to train instructors' competencies. The act of mentoring has been an essential component of the teacher preparation process (Klung & Dalzman, 1991). For the research, mentoring will be selected for training and enhancing teachers' competencies. In the field of teacher education, training and ongoing professional development may both be accomplished via mentoring.

This study aims to develop a Mentor-Reflective Theory that enhances the onboarding process for beginning teachers by investigating how mentorship and reflection experiences can improve their professional development and job satisfaction. The study aims to identify the critical elements of effective mentorship and reflection programs and to provide recommendations for implementing these practices in teacher onboarding programs.

Impact of Teacher Training on New Teachers' Professional Development

According to studies on teacher preparation, new teachers' personal development, attitudes on reflection, and classroom practices are substantially impacted by their training institutions (Poom-Valickis, 2007). New instructors require time to adjust to the classroom, and the school's structure and their colleagues' assistance are essential during this period of adjustment (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Guzman-Valenzuela & Cabello, 2017; Levine & Marcus, 2010). Among first-year instructors, the most significant challenges (is) are lack of emotional

support, constructive criticism, and familiarity with the school's culture (Day et al., 2007; Oplatka & Eizenberg, 2007; Sabar, 2004). Instructors transition to new schools with less difficulty when they work in contexts where colleagues actively encourage each other's professional development. There is a correlation between elements such as school structure, principal leadership, classroom environment, and the effectiveness and contentment of teachers (Shen et al., 2012). In addition, collaborative creativity, shared values and vision, a supportive atmosphere, and shared personal practice encourage teacher participation in decision-making (Harris & Muijs, 2005). A healthy balance between support and pressure needs official leaders to make long-term commitments (Clausen et al., 2009). Inexperienced teachers might learn professional patterns of thinking, action, and behavior more readily in a focused, introspective, and supportive environment, with regular interaction among colleagues (Clausen et al., 2009).

New teachers may learn a lot by working with more seasoned educators, primarily via mentorship programs, a standard component of programs designed to help teachers get started in their careers (Hobson et al., 2009; Klinge, 2015; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Collaboration of this kind and assistance from mentors are beneficial to new teachers' professional development and help them acclimate more quickly to the culture of their schools (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Both the mentor and the mentee can gain knowledge from one another via the process of mentoring, which may be carried out in many ways, including therapeutic, instructional, and reflective methods. The educational mentorship technique is instrumental in offering personalized help for professional growth (Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005). Wang and Odell (2002) discovered that significant connections between mentors and starting instructors include providing psychological support, technical aid, and information about local norms and regulations. It is crucial for successful mentoring to have clear communication of the practices and expectations involved.

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Importance of Mentorship Programs in Supporting New Teachers' Professional
Development

There are numerous goals and styles of mentoring that may not necessarily aid starting teachers in transitioning to the school organization. How much help other colleagues provide in mentoring new instructors is only sometimes evident. According to research by Moor et al. (2005), mentoring connections enhanced cooperation and job happiness, resulting in a culture of professional growth and support in participating institutions. The school's culture governs the success of mentoring, and the perceived support of mentors is correlated with the support of colleagues. To Hargreaves and Fullan (2000), mentoring is a chance to transform the teaching profession and school culture. For mentoring to alter school culture, it must assist individual teachers and contribute to developing robust teaching cultures in schools devoted to advancing teaching, learning, and care. Mentoring should be included in the school's culture to provide possibilities for teacher cooperation (Jokinen & Valjajarvi, 2006).

Previous studies have shown how crucial it is for the induction program to aid new teachers in adjusting to a cooperative, engaged, and senior management-supported organization (Author et al., 2013). While those who stop working with mentors tend to give lower evaluations of their organizational involvement, collaboration with colleagues, and senior management support, teachers who are involved in their school's development during their first year of employment and perceive mentor support value their progress and collaboration with colleagues (Author et al., 2013). The perception of leadership support and interest in the work of one's co-workers are also related (Author et al., 2015).

Value of Teacher Collaboration in Improving Teacher Effectiveness

Teacher collaboration has improved student outcomes and teacher effectiveness (Moolenaar et al., 2012; Vangrieken et al., 2015). Teachers' morale is raised when they can

collaborate with their peers, motivating them to be more attentive to their students' needs and adopt more student-centered pedagogical practices (Vescio et al., 2008; Kuh, 2016; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006). Collaboration, which includes class observations, dialogues, and critiques on teaching techniques, is essential for school improvement and collaborative learning (Doppenberg, den Brok, & Bakx, 2012; Levine & Marcus, 2010; Meirink et al., 2009).

Scholars and practitioners understand the value of teachers collaborating to enhance education, yet insufficient opportunities exist to build an environment favorable to teachers' continued professional growth. The first year of a teacher's profession does not mark the end of their time engaging with other educators; mentorship is one effective way of doing this. Extending the scope of the mentoring might enable the formation of long-lasting professional ties.

2. *Methodology*

Research Design

In this research, the Grounded Theory approach developed by Corbin and Strauss (2015) was employed. Grounded Theory is a qualitative research methodology that systematically generates theory from empirical data. This approach was particularly relevant to the study's objective of developing a new theory using a deductive approach.

The deductive approach in this study initiated with axioms, which functioned as a manifestation of theoretical sensitivity. These axioms served as a foundational point, firmly rooted in empirical observations and insights (Delaram & Valilai, 2018; Zhang et al., 2019). Corbin and Strauss's Grounded Theory approach is distinct for its emphasis on theory construction rather than the testing of pre-existing theories. Similarly, the study was engaged in constructing an original theory—the Mentor-Reflective Theory—based on axioms and propositions. This approach aligned with the concept of generating theory that naturally

emerged from the gathered data, following a structured thought process that advanced from forming broad concepts to specific conclusions (Bayne, 2018; Gilgun, 2019).

Grounded Theory acknowledged the importance of theory arising from the data instead of being predetermined. Concurrently, the study combined theoretical components such as axioms and propositions with empirical findings, facilitating the emergence of the Mentor-Reflective Theory through methodical analysis. Axioms are foundational postulates or theorems that are embraced within the theory, even in the absence of direct evidence stemming from other assertions (Lehrer, 2018). Conversely, propositions represented the outcomes or results derived from multiple axioms and were subjected to testing using suitable research methodologies (Zalaghi & Khazaei, 2016). The study strictly adhered to the procedures of theory construction as derived from Padua (2012), employing an axiomatic deductive technique in the formulation of the Mentor-Reflective Theory.

Figure 1

Deductive Axiomatic Approach in Theory Development (Adapted from Padua, 2012).
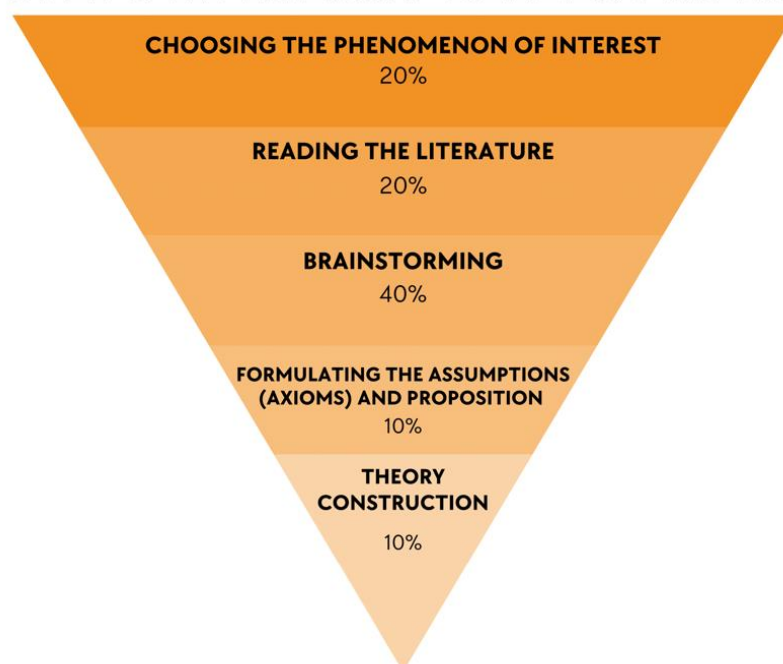
Data Collection Procedure

1. Choosing the phenomenon of interest. The phenomenon of interest in this context was the "experiences of beginning teachers during their initial years of teaching" within the framework of the teacher mentoring onboarding process. This phenomenon encompassed the diverse experiences of novice educators, which were influenced by factors such as the support and guidance they received from their mentors and the overall school culture (Jiang & Clarke, 2019).

The research aimed to delve into and comprehensively understand how mentoring contributed to the professional development and retention of beginning teachers. It sought to uncover key aspects related to this phenomenon, including the significance of mentor-mentee relationships, the effectiveness of mentoring practices, and the role played by the school culture in supporting and shaping the experiences of novice educators (George, 2019).

It is the multifaceted experiences of novice teachers during their initial years in the teaching profession, with a specific focus on the impact of mentoring and the broader school environment on their professional growth and retention.

2. Reading the literature. To better grasp the subject matter, the next thing to do in developing a theory is to carry out a literature study. According to Selden (2016), reading the various materials surveyed is an essential step in developing a theory. This is because it is in these materials that the phenomenon can be explicitly discussed, the substance of the point of interest can be comprehensively elaborated, and finally, it is in these materials that the details can be comprehensively laid out to broaden the knowledge base of the phenomenon. When onboarding new teachers, this stage entails doing literature research on the various teacher mentorship programs, best practices, and issues that new teachers experience.

Through reading and analyzing the literature, the theorist can contextualize the meaning of the nature of why the theory is being developed. This will enable them to identify

potential solutions and recommendations for addressing the gaps in the current practice. Furthermore, broadening their knowledge base can strengthen the formulation of different axioms and propositions that will eventually form the theory (Mintzberg, 2017). In the case of teacher onboarding, this step would involve identifying the key factors contributing to successful teacher mentoring programs and developing a framework to guide the development of effective mentoring programs for beginning teachers.

3. Brainstorming. Information gathering refers to accumulating essential data to link other ideas and provide diverse perspectives that highlight the numerous factors that might lead to the construction of axioms and declarations (Paulus & Kenworthy, 2019). In this stage, the knowledge that will be employed later in the process of theory development is enhanced in terms of its coherence and coherence (Henningsen & Henningsen, 2018). It is essential to participate in brainstorming to convergently align data and related articles to emphasize the significance of recent occurrences (Seeber et al., 2017).

4. Formulating the Axioms and Propositions. In teacher mentoring onboarding process, the elicitation of pertinent information is crucial in generating the axioms and propositions. As Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2021) noted, the information gathered can include the experiences and perspectives of beginning teachers, mentors, and other stakeholders involved in the process. Brainstorming sessions can also help identify different factors that may contribute to the success or challenges beginning teachers face during onboarding (Seeber et al., 2017). Different perspectives can be shared through brainstorming, and ideas can be organized and connected to generate a coherent and cohesive theory.

Moreover, the information gathered during this stage can contextualize the phenomenon and better understand the different variables and their relationships that need to be considered in the theory development process (Mintzberg, 2017). This can help ensure that

the theory is comprehensive and provide practical recommendations for addressing the challenges beginning teachers face during onboarding.

5. Theory Construction. In the axiomatic deductive method, the final stage involved aligning all premises to formulate a coherent theory (Stergiou & Airey, 2018). Ensured logical consistency between the theory and its foundational axioms or assumptions was paramount (Lehrer, 2018). The resulting theory, crafted through this approach, provided a systematic comprehension of the teacher mentoring process, elucidating opportunities for improvement to enhance the experiences of novice educators during their onboarding (Kivunja, 2018).

Furthermore, rigorous evaluation of the theory was imperative, with considerations for reliability, validity, and generalizability (Babbie, 2016). Reliability pertained to the theory's stability and consistency over time. Validity assessed the accuracy and truthfulness of the theory's assertions. Conversely, generalizability gauged the extent to which the theory could be applied to diverse contexts or situations (Babbie, 2016). Consequently, the theory developed within the teacher mentoring onboarding context exhibited reliability, validity, and generalizability, ensuring its applicability across various settings and its capacity to produce consistent and accurate outcomes.

3. Results (Findings) and Discussion

Phenomenon

The field of education recognizes that mentoring is a valuable policy option in helping beginning teachers to develop their professional knowledge and skills. However, successful mentoring requires careful planning and consideration of its complexity and processes (Schiefele & Schwanzer, 2019). High-quality teaching is critical for educational improvement or reform, and teachers are essential resources in achieving this goal (Grainger, 2019). Well-designed mentoring programs can provide the necessary support for beginning teachers to

enhance their performance in the classroom and facilitate their induction into the profession (Hobson et al., 2017).

Mentoring is a powerful tool for continually improving teachers' professional knowledge and skills, which is essential for preparing students for the future (Huber & Kuncel, 2016). However, to be effective, mentoring programs must consider the program's complexity, processes, and functions (Tavares, 2018). Therefore, developing a theory that promotes the positive impact of intensive onboarding processes for beginning teachers in education is necessary.

The Mentor-Reflective Theory in Teacher Onboarding was developed to address this need, emphasizing the importance of reflective practices in mentoring programs for beginning teachers (Kim et al., 2018). The theory posits that reflective mentoring can enhance beginning teachers' professional development by facilitating self-reflection, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Additionally, reflective mentoring can provide a supportive environment for beginning teachers to develop positive attitudes toward their profession and help them navigate the complexities of the teaching profession (Korthagen et al., 2016).

The development of the Mentor-Reflective Theory in Teacher onboarding highlights the importance of well-designed mentoring programs that consider the program's complexity, process, and function in promoting the positive impact of intensive onboarding processes for beginning teachers in education.

Axioms

To construct a theory, it is necessary first to recognize and then articulate the axioms that will act as the theory's underlying premises. The researchers combed through the relevant literature and studies to establish specific incontrovertibly correct claims. The following axioms have been discovered: (1) Competency and self-assurance are necessary components

of professional growth gained via mentorship. Beginning teachers might benefit from learning new pedagogical tactics and improving their general abilities by participating in professional development programs, which can ultimately lead to increased confidence levels. This is reinforced by research that demonstrates that professional development programs may lead to better teaching techniques, which can lead to improved student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). (2) Mentoring allows for identifying and filling up knowledge and skill gaps in general. Structured professional development opportunities, such as training and experience in classroom observation and coaching skills, may help strengthen a mentor's capacity for leadership. These opportunities include training and experience in mentoring relationships.

Training for mentors is an essential component of productive mentoring, and those mentors who have had training are more likely to provide starting instructors assistance of a high-quality (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Self-efficacy among educators may be improved via a mentoring program. Teachers can achieve better levels of self-efficacy by participating in an organized and structured induction program, which may increase the percentage of teachers who remain in the profession. Studies have demonstrated that instructors participating in a systematic induction program are more likely to remain in the teaching profession. Moreover, such programs have the potential to favorably influence teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

By formulating these axioms, the researchers developed a theory that will promote a positive impact brought by intensive onboarding processes for beginning teachers in education.

Axiom 1: Professional development through mentoring involves competency skills and confidence. According to Kerry and Shelton (1995), mentors play an essential role in competency-based training by directing and monitoring the mentees' actions in the micro-teaching technique. The competency-based training strategy consists of two steps: (1) mentors

encourage mentees by affirming their abilities, inspiring, and challenging them to grow professionally, and (2) mentors guide mentees' professional development by giving them control of the teaching process, allowing them to take responsibility for actual teaching. This training method helps instructors to gain skill-based skills relevant to the twenty-first century.

Portner (2008) added that mentoring stimulates mentees to improve and develop their creative and critical thinking skills, which helps them build their vision for future situations. Mentees learn to adapt to changing situations with their innovative spirits by taking control of their mentors' teaching process. Thus, professional development through mentoring can enhance beginning teachers' competency skills and confidence, leading to higher levels of performance and job satisfaction in the education sector.

Axiom 2: Mentoring identifies and corrects gaps in generic skills and knowledge. Mentoring programs can help identify and address gaps in generic skills and knowledge by providing targeted support and guidance to mentees. According to Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005), mentoring can help individuals better understand their strengths and weaknesses and how they can develop their skills to meet the requirements of their job. By providing feedback and guidance on performance, mentors can help mentees to identify and correct gaps in their knowledge and skills.

Mentor training can also be crucial in ensuring mentors are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to identify and correct generic skills and knowledge gaps effectively. This can involve training in coaching, feedback, and communication skills. According to Allen and Eby (2007), mentor training can help to improve the quality and effectiveness of mentoring relationships and ultimately lead to better outcomes for mentees.

Mentoring can be a powerful tool for identifying and addressing generic skills and knowledge gaps. By providing targeted support and guidance, mentors can help individuals develop the skills they need to succeed in their current roles and reach their full potential. As

a result, mentoring can lead to increased effectiveness and productivity at work and improved job satisfaction and retention rates.

Axiom 3 Mentoring helps teachers gain higher levels of self-efficacy. "Self-efficacy" refers to an individual's conviction to carry out a particular activity or realize a desired outcome (Bandura, 1977). Educators with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to succeed in their classroom practices and have greater work satisfaction (Tsouloupas et al., 2014).

According to research, low levels of self-efficacy are linked to an increased risk of stress and behavioral problems, which negatively influence work satisfaction (Klassen et al., 2009; OECD, 2014a). Nevertheless, providing teachers with professional development opportunities, such as mentorship, may increase their ability to effectively manage the responsibilities and responses they are responsible for (Tsouloupas et al., 2014).

In addition, it has been shown that established and structured mentorship programs may assist educators in attaining better levels of self-efficacy, which leads to an increase in the percentage of teachers who remain in the profession (OECD, 2014b). As a result, it is vital to provide assistance, direction, and mentorship to teachers to foster the growth of their sense of self-efficacy and enhance their performance in the classroom.

Propositions

Formulating the three axioms based on the literature review led the researcher to construct six propositions that provide insights into the benefits of professional development and mentoring for beginning teachers. The first proposition is that providing professional development opportunities for beginning teachers prepares them to become competent at work by developing their knowledge, skills, and pedagogical strategies. Studies have shown that professional development programs positively impact teacher effectiveness, student outcomes, and teacher retention (Bastick & Crawford, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The second proposition is that mentoring provides opportunities for beginning teachers to enhance their skills through the guidance, feedback, and support of experienced mentors. Studies have found that mentoring can improve the instructional practices of beginning teachers, increase their self-efficacy, and lead to higher levels of job satisfaction (Allen & Eby, 2007; Clutterbuck & Megginson, 2005).

The third proposition is that reflective mentoring help beginning teachers absorb an organization's values, norms, and standards. Through the observation of experienced teachers, beginning teachers can learn about the school's culture, climate, and expectations and develop a sense of belonging and identity as a member of the teaching profession (Lunenberg et al., 2014).

The fourth proposition is that teacher mentoring impacts self-efficacy, which is linked to job satisfaction. Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy have been found to experience lower levels of stress and higher levels of job satisfaction and are more likely to remain in the teaching profession (Klassen et al., 2009; OECD, 2014a). Therefore, mentoring can be crucial in helping beginning teachers develop the self-efficacy they need to succeed in their roles.

The four propositions provide essential insights into the benefits of professional development and mentoring for beginning teachers, highlighting the importance of providing these opportunities to enhance teacher effectiveness, improve student outcomes, and increase teacher retention.

Proposition 1: Providing professional development for beginning teachers prepares them to become competent at work. Proposition 1 suggests that equipping beginning teachers with professional development opportunities can enhance their competencies and make them more effective at their job. Gordon (2014) states that a successful professional development program must incorporate adult learning principles and promote empowerment. This training is essential in preparing teachers for mentoring and enabling them to adopt reflective practices

necessary for teachers in the modern era. With such training, beginning teachers may rely on superficial support and adapt to the demands of their profession. Thus, this proposition argues that professional development programs can be critical in preparing teachers for their role and enhancing their effectiveness.

Proposition 2: Mentoring provides opportunities for beginning teachers to enhance their skills. It is suggested in Proposition 2 that mentorship programs provide an opportunity for both inexperienced and more seasoned educators to learn and improve their professional capabilities. The connection between the mentor and the mentee makes it easier for the experienced person to share their expertise with the less experienced person. Usually, mentoring programs are designed to link inexperienced instructors with more seasoned educators. However, mentoring programs may also benefit more seasoned teachers who have moved into leadership responsibilities (Manley, 2018). Beginning teachers may enhance their effectiveness in some professions, such as public speaking, administration, and strategic thinking, by receiving mentorship from more experienced instructors. The method focuses on improving the abilities essential to correctly carry out the obligations required daily. As a result, the findings of this article imply that mentorship might allow starting instructors to improve their abilities.

Proposition 3: Reflective mentoring help beginning teachers absorb an organization's values, norms, and standards. Proposition 3 states that were beginning teachers can learn and internalize their organization's values, norms, and standards through reflective mentoring. Schön (1996) defined that reflective practice involves critically analyzing one's work with the guidance of more experienced mentors, which can lead to reinforced or changed actions. Reflective practice has become a necessary skill for educators and is often discussed as part of obtaining a teaching license. Through reflection, educators can gain a deeper understanding of their teaching practices and connect theory to their daily experiences, enhancing their

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professional worth. Reflective mentoring provides opportunities for beginning teachers to observe and analyze the practices of more experienced educators, which can help them internalize their organization's values, norms, and standards. This proposition is based on the work of Zuckerman (2001).

Proposition 4: Teacher mentoring impacts self-efficacy that is linked with job satisfaction. According to Greenglass and Burke (2003), teaching can be a source of both personal satisfaction and stress, as teachers face demands from administrators, colleagues, students, and parents, along with work overload and misbehavior. This stress can result in lower self-efficacy, poorer teacher-pupil rapport, and reduced effectiveness. High-stress levels can also mute teachers' satisfaction with their work, mainly due to role ambiguity, low autonomy, or conflicts with students and colleagues. Teaching has been recognized as a high-stress profession, with as many as one-quarter of teachers reporting it as a very stressful job (Kyriacou, 2001). Such stress can result in adverse outcomes such as burnout, absenteeism, and even leaving the teaching profession altogether. Given this, the paper suggests that teacher mentoring can impact self-efficacy, linked to job satisfaction.

Mentor-Reflective Theory

The Mentor-Reflective Theory was formulated to address the challenges beginning teachers face in their professional development. These challenges include the steep learning curve, lack of experience, and inadequate school support structures. The theory proposes that reflective mentoring provide opportunities for beginning teachers to enhance their skills and absorb an organization's values, norms, and standards.

Figure 2

Mentor-Reflective Theory
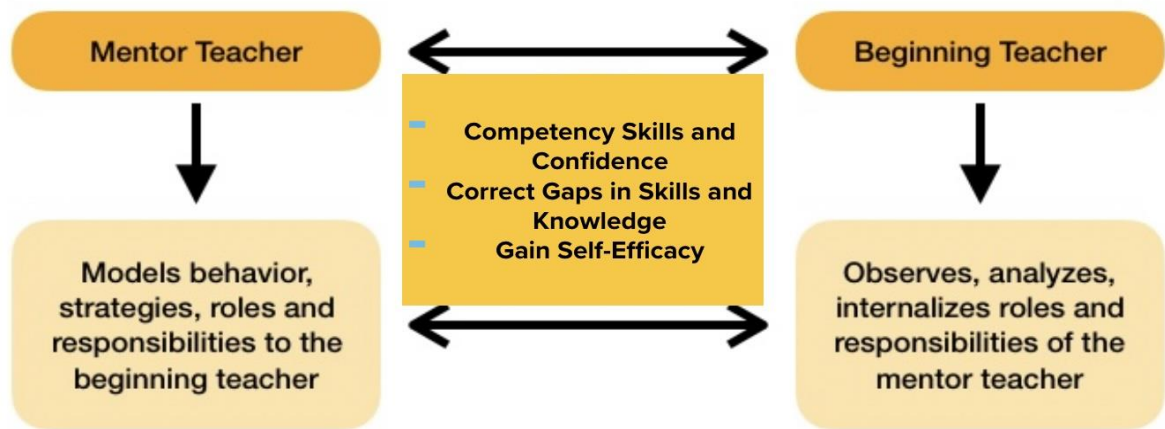
Mentoring involves a one-on-one relationship between a mentor and a mentee, where the mentor provides guidance, advice, and encouragement to the mentee. This relationship exposes the beginning teacher to different teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, and educational philosophies. The mentor helps the beginning teacher to reflect on their teaching practice, identify areas of improvement, and develop action plans to enhance their skills.

On the other hand, reflective mentoring provides beginning teachers with the opportunity to learn about their teaching career by observing a professional teacher in action. This allows them to understand better the skills, knowledge, and competencies required to be an effective teacher. It also provides a safe environment for beginning teachers to experiment with new teaching techniques and strategies without the pressure of being solely responsible for their classroom. This theory is being developed to provide a structured framework for effectively onboarding beginning teachers, with a particular focus on the role of reflective mentoring in their professional development and its impact on factors such as self-efficacy and job satisfaction. It is a theory that aims to enhance the support structures for novice educators,

improve their retention rates, and contribute to enhanced student outcomes in educational settings.

The Mentor-Reflective Theory recognizes that teaching can be a stressful and demanding profession. Reflective mentoring can impact the self-efficacy of beginning teachers, which is linked to job satisfaction. It can help beginning teachers feel more confident in their abilities by providing support, guidance, and encouragement, leading to increased job satisfaction and improved classroom facilitation. The theory posits that mentors play a pivotal role in identifying and scaffolding the learning opportunities within the zone of proximal development (ZPD) for mentored beginning teachers. By carefully aligning their mentoring practices with the individual needs and competencies of novice educators, mentors facilitate the expansion of the ZPD. This expansion enables beginning teachers to gradually take on more complex teaching responsibilities, refine their instructional techniques, and develop a deeper understanding of pedagogical concepts.

Moreover, the Mentor-Reflective Theory underscores the reciprocal nature of mentor-mentee interactions within the ZPD. As mentors guide beginning teachers through the challenges and intricacies of their profession, they also benefit from the reflective process. This reciprocal learning dynamic enriches the mentoring relationship and contributes to the overall success of teacher onboarding.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Mentor-Reflective Theory presents a comprehensive framework for the effective onboarding of beginning teachers. This theory acknowledges the pivotal role of reflective mentoring in fostering the professional growth of novice educators, which in turn influences their self-efficacy and job satisfaction. The implementation of this theory within educational

institutions holds the potential to establish robust support systems for beginning teachers, ultimately leading to higher retention rates and improved student outcomes.

To further solidify the Mentor-Reflective Theory's credibility and applicability, various methodologies and resources will be employed for rigorous testing. Future researchers are encouraged to delve into the process of providing results and substantiating each hypothesis. This validation approach is instrumental in furnishing essential evidence regarding the effectiveness of the Mentor-Reflective Theory in the realm of teacher onboarding. This validation process serves as a cornerstone for ensuring the authenticity and practicality of the Mentor-Reflective Theory in the education of new teachers, thereby enhancing their professional competence. It may also open avenues for exploring the theory's effectiveness, identifying areas for refinement, and paving the way for future research endeavors in the field of teacher onboarding.

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