

Teacher Mentoring in India and NEP 2020: An Overview

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Abstract

“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.” — William Arthur Ward

Teaching is regarded as the noblest profession on earth, everyone has regard and respects for this profession in spite the fact that the teachers have become less noble and a teaching career has become just another career choice. Often teachers have the dual role of teaching and developing the character of the child. The teacher has to play the role of the facilitator and mentor too. In the words of Malderez (2001), “The term mentoring describes the support given by one (usually more experienced) person for the growth and learning of another, and for their integration into and acceptance by a specific community.” Earlier the term “teacher mentoring” and induction were considered to be the same. According to Strong (2005), “Induction once was sharply defined in educational literature as referring to a broad spectrum of activities geared to novice teachers that included one-to-one mentoring and community orientation, but additionally encompassed peer study groups, team planning and teaching, and tele mentoring, mentoring through videoconferencing and Internet communication.” In NEP 2020, the role of teachers and their contribution in the field of education has been highlighted. According to this policy, for inculcating 21st-century skills, knowledge, and learning outcomes amongst students, teachers will be responsible for all this. There is not much discussion about the mentoring of teachers but if we will not take this issue seriously the results will be in reverse mode instead of expecting something good, it will do more harm. In the curricula of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), in schools there is compulsion of the pre-service training of teachers. But this is not enough for the growth of teachers as well as students. The training should be continued in their in-service professional development as well. The present paper highlights the importance of teacher mentoring in context of NEP 2020.

Keywords: Mentoring, Teacher Mentoring, NEP 2020

Introduction

Mentoring

The word Mentoring has its origin in the Greek Language meaning “enduring--is defined as a sustained relationship between a youth and an adult”. There is no doubt that personal

relationship between mentor and mentee is established but it is for the sake of professional guidance and instruction. According to Evenson (1982), “In education, the value of mentoring has been recognized in the use of teachers and other professionals in one-on-one instruction of students for vocational education, science, and reading.” Burley & Pomphrey, (2011), concluded in favour of mentoring that “Across the globe, mentoring is used in a wide range of school contexts for a variety of purposes, being viewed as a key professional learning tool from initial teacher education (ITE) to senior leadership development.” In today’s scenario, it has become so comprehensive that it was declared by Sundli in 2007 as “a global mantra within teacher education.”

In the words of O’Brien & Hamburg, (2014), “Mentoring involves guidance and suggestion, as well as the development of autonomous skills, judgments, personal and professional mastership, expertise, trust and the development of self-confidence over time”. Importance of Mentoring cannot be denied. The purpose of mentoring is not just to provide skills as well as knowledge which mentors impart to the students but it is also related to socialization in professional and personal terms. Students' chances for success can be greatly enhanced by quality mentoring. Many researches have shown that only those students have gained success in academic arena that has good mentoring experience.

Teacher Mentoring

In NEP 2020, teachers are considered as one of the most significant part of it. Earlier, there was decline in the percentage of teaching profession and there were many reasons behind this like lack of education, training, proper recruitment, teaching quality, motivation, active service conditions and inadequate systemic reforms. Teacher mentoring is the best answer to all these issues.

Basically, Teacher mentoring is a formal process in which a teacher who is seeking professional renewal or a new teacher is being helped by an experienced educator. According to Pitton (2006), “The object of such dialogue is to assist the mentee in establishing realistic performance benchmarks for teaching and to feel intellectually and psychologically connected to a fellow educator as a guide, a supporter, a friend, an advocate, and a role model”. The term induction, in the 21st century in the educational literature, is often replaced by mentoring.

To help new teacher through guidance and assistance for smooth functioning of the institution, teacher mentors are selected. For succession of Teacher Mentor Program, the

association matters a lot which develops between an experienced mentor and a new teacher. It is the responsibility of the teacher mentor to initiate and maintain the relationship. Such type of relationship should be developed where both equality and secrecy are keys to effective communication. It should be communicated by the mentor teacher that sharing expectations and periodic review will give strength to the process. A positive, accepting attitude is crucial and sets the tone for a cooperative relationship. A mentor teacher should provide positive and constructive environment of open and working relationship where the ideas, feelings. Problems can be shared. In the words of Fletcher (2000), “The role of a mentor is to offer relevant, practical advice and critical support to the mentee in order for him to overcome the problem.” The function of mentoring is not just to improve the knowledge of both giver and taker but it also improves the retention rate of teachers. It has the potentiality of recruitment tool.

Benefits of Teacher Mentoring Program to the Educational System:

The mentor, the mentee and the school system –all are benefitted by an interactive system teacher mentoring program in the following manner.

The Mentors:

Teacher preparation programmes sometimes are not up to the mark as everything required is not present in the programmes and if present, they are not very clear. The problems faced by the new teachers give opportunities to mentor teachers to reexamine their classroom practices. According to Krupp (1984), “Mentors gain the satisfaction of being able to transfer skills and knowledge accumulated through extensive professional practice.” Professional competence opportunities are provided to the mentee by the mentors by a cycle of assessment. Finally, the mentee is directed by the mentor for their academic and professional growth to get into the professional organizations.

The mentee:

According to Evenson (1982), “One of the most recognized uses of mentoring is the conveyance of operating procedures to the beginner,” The mentor is benefitted in different ways like organization of professional competence, rapid integration into the school environment and introduction to teaching as a continually developing, lifelong career.

The school administration:

Driscoll et al., (1985), “The school administration provides an introduction to the rules but the mentor teaches the skills necessary to comply and cope with them.” School is an

important part of teaching learning process. It is benefitted by mentoring programmes in all aspects. In the words of Driscoll et al., (1985), “A school which enthusiastically welcomes beginning teachers and initiates them to active participation in the educational processes potentially reduces its teacher attrition rate.” The fresh teachers at once catches the problems after close supervision which no doubt affects the instructional process. For solution of this problem, experiences teachers are involved in the program for their guidance and suggestions. They also provide productive, constructive and innovative environment to the mentees for their life long professional careers.

Effective Staff Development Approach is another name for teacher mentoring programmes for the new teachers. According to Little and Nelson (1990), “By establishing teacher mentoring programs, the district serves two important purposes: novice teachers are given a strong start at the beginning of their careers, and experienced classroom teachers serving as mentors receive recognition and incentives.” It has been concluded by many researchers and Ganser (1996), “Mentoring can be a valuable process in educational reform for beginning teachers as well as veteran teachers.”

Purpose of Teacher Mentoring

1. A beginning teacher is paired with a more experienced teacher in this program. Depending on the need of the new teachers and the goals of the organization, sometimes, the pairing can involve one or more new teachers or a group of more experienced teachers.
2. Full support is provided to the new teacher as to build a mentor-mentee relationship between two or more individuals is not only the purpose of teacher mentoring. This proves beneficial for the new teachers as their confidence built up and moreover it allows them to settle into the organization immediately and maximize their effectiveness as instructors.
3. Educational system quality standard is also established by this program as it is also helpful in the recruitment and retention of new staff.
4. Teacher mentoring programmes directly or indirectly benefits the education system if it is implemented properly. As a process, teacher mentoring may be used formally, such as when a school wishes to implement particular programs or informally, where no programs are in place.

Benefits of Teacher Mentorship Programs

Teachers who are new to a school system and moreover teachers who are facing a changing academic scene –all are benefitted by teacher mentorship program. In this the well experienced and expert instructors serves as mentors for those who have less experience. They provide them the strategies for handling problems related to time management, disciplinary, parent interaction and many more. Guidance is provided by them at each and every step of any problem faced by them.

Additional Training

In colleges as well schools, teachers undergo routine training related to syllabus, curriculum, making of lesson plans, teaching methods and many more. But this training is not sufficient to make them best teachers in each and every aspect. The reason behind this may be dearth of time. A mentoring program is an additional training apart from routine training which focus on the important considerations and details. It ensures full support to all.

Restriction of time

A teacher has lot of work to do on daily basis. Lot of energy and time is required to look after all the activities like making time –table, lessons plans, and arrangements of all the academic and non-academic activities, preparation of the tests. Sometimes it become difficult for the new teachers to manage all these activities. So, a mentor program can help an inexperienced teacher or new teacher in the best organization of the time and how to complete all the activities within limited period of time and with less energy.

Retention of Qualified Educators

There is no doubt that there are many teachers who work in the schools and colleges of their choice but after sometime they also quit their job and move to new place, new area and new environment. The main reason behind this is stress and workload which sometimes overpower the teachers. A mentor program trains the new teacher to adjust in all the situations. It also guides them to handle all the situations and how to cope with them.

Disciplinary Style

When it comes to the point of Classroom discipline which is very difficult to maintain, it becomes difficult for the new teachers. What kind of discipline and what amount of it is required is a difficult question to be solved? All these questions are answered by mentoring program which is not at all possible through a routine training program.

Mutual Support

Sometimes, the new teachers after a short span of time, takes responsibilities of the students and classroom not very seriously. They take it as a routine task and adopt flexible approach. They even don't try to take guidance or contact their seniors regarding any difficulty. What a mentoring program for teachers does is that an important element of professional support is added to it.

A teacher mentorship program provides a qualified support to fulfill its purpose. The main aim of this program is that the burden and issues faced by the new teachers are solved by this program. Retention rates are also increased and moreover it also encourages well –managed, safe and academically captivating classrooms.

Conclusion

The most valuable resources in education are the teachers and the main ingredient of educational reform is high quality performance in teaching. In order to assist the new teachers, their performances should be supported from the very beginning of their teaching careers. “Mentoring entered the vocabulary of teacher education in the early 1980’s as part of a broader effort to professionalize teaching.” (Feiman-Nemser, 1998). In the words of Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, & Niles (1992), “Mentors can provide beginning teachers with practical, specific help in working with students and parents, providing instruction, and dealing with the school environment.” “Mentoring teachers lies at the core of the education system, as it has immense transformative potential. It is not about passing on the torch of knowledge from the mentor to the mentee but a belief in 'commitment to education, hope for its future, and a respect for those who enter into its community'.” (Shadiow 1996, p. 277). Teacher mentoring values a person. NEP 2020 has made a promise and mentoring is that promise and it is our duty to for keep both in letter and spirit. We must fulfill all the requirements mentioned in NEP 2020 regarding teacher mentoring programmes and implement it properly to get productive output.

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