Mentorship Strategies

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Introduction

a. Statement of the Problem

In developing 21st century learners, it is necessity that students be able to work efficiently with information in an applied context to build student competency. A competent student not only has an ever-improving skill set, but also develops self efficacy to know they have the skills, or can acquire the skills to be successful.

Authentic and holistic learning experiences provide a context for students to practice 21st century skills. However, not all teachers have the capacity to design, plan and deliver these integrated learning experiences. One of CAPE's pillars to academic support academic and personal excellence is the use of integrated learning and so having competent teachers leading these is a clear expectation.

b. Significance of the Problem and Historical Background

In 2010, there was a noticeable difference in the school in the number of student-posted work that celebrated learning. Some of this was attributed to the loss of educational spaces; specifically in the reassigning of our library and art room as general classroom spaces. The question was posed and staff discussed, how can we continue to offer quality integrated learning experiences with reducing space. As well, staff were admittedly focussed on individualization strategies, one of CAPE's other pillars.

Each year, CAPE conducts satisfaction surveys and include parents, students, and staff in the data collection. In the June 2011 surveys, students indicated an increasing level of dissatisfaction with integrated learning and also a higher rate of dissatisfaction with feeling they had the necessary skills to promote life-long learning. For years, regular in-service sessions were held to revisit integration strategies, but that was proving to be insufficient to both maintain and build teacher capacity. That fall, our staff began targeted professional development strategies to address this dissatisfaction. The first step of that process was to define integrated learning activities from various sources of research and categorize them.

For the 2011 school year, collaborative planning, peer support through pod planning, peer modelling, and individual endeavours were used as the main vehicles for professional development. Instructional staff were provided with release time to meet with colleagues and share ideas, provide feedback, and collectively discuss observations of effectiveness. While staff was feeling a greater satisfaction in their capacity, the student dissatisfaction increased in the spring 2012 survey. Whatever we believed we were doing to improve was not translating into student success nor student efficacy. While there were some gains being made in various classrooms, there was not a readily-identified school-wide practice that was yielding consistent results. While pockets of growth were noted, it was apparent that an alternative strategy was required.

For the 2012 year, book studies were added and methodological approach was structured to guide the research study. Along with the regular discussion of strategies came the indication that there were limited benefits to small and large group strategies. Teachers admittedly learned in different ways and needed a differentiated model of professional development. As preferences for learning were made more evident, we began looking for models that were strength-based, could be implemented during work hours, offered both cognitive and affective rewards, delivered in a risk-free environment, and recognize expertise within our school and education community partnerships.

c. Purpose/Research Focus

My goals were twofold; first, to develop teacher capacity to deliver high-quality learning experiences, and second, to develop my skill set to work with individual teachers (recognizing different learning needs, styles, paces, motivating factors, etc.) to build the human capital with the school.

d. Research problem

How and to what extent can teachers' use of integrated instructional strategies impact student learning?

e. Research question

How and to what extent does mentorship impact teacher efficacy to offer integrated learning experiences to students?

f. Research aim

The aim of my research would be to increase teacher capacity with integrated learning experiences. This increase in human capital would ensure each class has a highly-effective teacher invested in building student academic success and student efficacy.

As well, I aspire to increase my effectiveness as an administrator to be the principal educator. In this role, it is important for me to be able to work with a variety of people to encourage growth and responsive teaching for all students. As well, in mentoring other leaders, whether it be the vice-principal or lead teachers, I hope to increase my skill sets in relationships, leading a learning community and developing school leadership.

g. Statement of Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that previous activities to develop teacher capacity have been unsuccessful because they did not address different levels of expertise, learning styles and identified area of need. By offering a professional development method that addressed these issues, the desired outcome would be achieved.

In designing this study, my assumption was that if we as a school are able to increase teacher capacity to offer integrated learning experiences, then students will benefit from authentic and holistic learning to increase their success and efficacy.

h. Assumptions

Assumption 1:
As an educational leader, I can impact student learning by facilitating professional learning for teachers.

Educational leadership has multiple and diverse meaning. Leaders provide direction and exercise influence to mobilize others to achieve shared goals (CEPA, 2003). Basic leadership skills include setting directions, developing people, and developing the organization. Working as a leader involves working with others (direct leadership) and through others (indirect). As most of leadership involves a variety of functions, the impact of leaders tends to be mostly indirect.

The functions of leadership are influenced by contextual aspects: individual leader, contextual constraints, the nature of the goals (CEPA, 2003) along with individual teacher needs (Hilton, et al,

2015). In leading a learning community, providing methods for professional development, along with modelling professional development is viewed as just one of the functions of school leaders (Hilton, et al, 2015). Professional development infers that practices can be improved and that change will happen for the better. As such, school leaders also have to be agents of change that support risk taking, provide opportunities to take risks, and engage in reflective practices about these facilitated experiences (Hilton et al, 2015).

As noted by Hilton et al, leaders have the ability to "make or break" professional learning and effective learning practice. The principal's influence, as a quality leader, has a profound effect on shaping the culture of that school (Fullan, 1992). Even more noted is that a school leader's ability to structure conditions for professional learning, though allocating time, building relationships, allocating funds, etc. has a direct correlation to their influence on a community of learning teachers. Participating side-by-side in professional development creates a greater community of learning and strengthens the overall impact on student learning (Hilton et al, 2015).

Assumption 2:
Teachers are interested in learning to improve practice. The teaching profession is a competency-based profession (accountability, responsibility).

The complexities of teacher learning are best noted in the context of adult learners. Further to teachers being adult learners, they are part of a professional organization. As such, teachers are required to engage in continuous learning.

Needless to say, in an educational context, learning should be the primary focus of not only the students, but of the teachers and leaders as well. However, there are complexities within this that create hurdles for improvement. Teachers are in control of their own development and change for improvement. Clarke and Hollingsworth identified areas which shape this development as active learning, reflection, and participation in practice and professional growth programs. As changes happen they will be recognized in 4 domains as proposed in the Interconnected Model of Teachers Professional Growth:

- the knowledge, beliefs and attitude of the teacher: the Personal Domain;
- the professional preparation, practice, and experimentation: the Domain of Practice;
- the perceived consequences of the change and learning; the Domain of Consequence; and
- the external forces of information or stimulus; the External Domain.

Assumption 3: Reflective practice is integral to teacher improvement.

In multiple studies, the regular use of reflection or engaging in reflective practices were seen as a key methods to help both mentors and protégés reach new understandings and improve their own practice (Ehrich, L., Hansford, B., & Tennent, L., 2001). Reflective practice was clearly woven throughout various mentorship strategies. When coaching involves skill development, being reflective is indeed a skill. While reflection for action and in reflection action are individual skills, they are best interwoven into practice together. In fact, reflective practices were listed as the most valuable aspect of mentorship education programs as noted by Beutel and Spooner-Lane (2009) as cited by Aspfors & Fransson (2015).

Assumption 4: Mentorship offers benefits that previous models do not.

While a plethora of research speaks to a multitude of vehicles used for professional development, much less research addresses to the need for individualized teacher development and professional development programs which is noted by Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Zwart, Wobbles, Bergen & Bolhuis, 2007, as cited by Hilton et al., 2015. Furthermore, Clarke and Hollingsworth agreed that many

models of professional development have failed to take into account individual learner variables and what is required for these individuals to change practice.

Mentorship is personalized. It allows for the protégé to have an active role in the learning. Specific, learning-focused feedback is provided. Topics of discussion, pacing, timing, and directions for action can all be individualized for the individual protégé.

Mentorship offers both cognitive and affective benefits. Mentors offer cognitive expertise as they are knowledgeable peers. There are also social and emotional benefits offered by mentorship that group models cannot support. As a relationship builds between mentor and protégé, there is an increase in trust, safety, and risk-taking as the social and emotional support are present.

Mentorship involves the accumulation of skills to develop job satisfaction and personal satisfaction. Unlike coaching, which focuses on skill competencies alone, mentorship acknowledges the satisfaction that comes from being cognitive of one's development, working towards a goal to gain a greater feeling of self.

Mentorship is reciprocal in nature. Unlike top-down or lecture-type strategies, mentorship has the capacity to exchange learning between the individuals in the relationships. As relationships build and learning biomes a group process, the human capital of the organization increases and thus continues to support the organization.

i. Limitations

The limitations of this study include:

- time frame of three years. This study was conducted in an Alberta charter school from September 2013 - June 2016.
- the people included in this study. This study included 17 teachers. Some of these teachers taught full time core (Humanities and/or Sciences) while others taught half-time core, and only a couple taught non-core (second languages, PE, etc.) Teachers included in this study were educated on integrated learning and individualized education strategies.
- mentorship strategies selected included: coaching, facilitating, counselling, and networking (Lansberg, 1996; Rhodes, Stokes, and Hampton, 2004).

j. Definition of Terms

Integrated instructional strategies:

- define topics from social studies and science curriculum
- include literacy
- include numeracy
- imbed health & wellness
- include physical activity
- use of a community/historic venue
- use of community services (police, fire services, hospital, city offices)
- use of community health facilities
- include visual arts & design
- include drama
- include music
- visit a community arts venue
- access consultants
- access guest speakers
- purposefully use multi-ability grouping

Student learning:

- academic growth (maintained or increased report card marks or standardized test scores)
- student efficacy (increased self-reflection scores, increase satisfaction results on student surveys)

Student efficacy:

Students with a strong sense of efficacy are more likely to challenge themselves with difficult tasks and be intrinsically motivated. These students will put forth a high degree of effort in order to meet their commitments, and attribute failure to things which are in their control, rather than blaming external factors. Self-efficacious students also recover quickly from setbacks, and ultimately are likely to achieve their personal goals. Students with low self-efficacy, on the other hand, believe they cannot be successful and thus are less likely to make a concerted, extended effort and may consider challenging tasks as threats that are to be avoided. Thus, students with poor self-efficacy have low aspirations which may result in disappointing academic performances becoming part of a self-fulfilling feedback cycle. Bandura, [Margolis and McCabe, 2006]

> *There are four sources of self-efficacy. Teachers can use strategies to build self-efficacy in various ways.*
> ***Mastery experiences -** Students' successful experiences boost self-efficacy, while failures erode it. This is the most robust source of self-efficacy.*
> ***Vicarious experience -** Observing a peer succeed at a task can strengthen beliefs in one's own abilities.*
> ***Verbal persuasion -** Teachers can boost self-efficacy with credible communication and feedback to guide the student through the task or motivate them to make their best effort.*
> ***Emotional state -**A positive mood can boost one's beliefs in self-efficacy, while anxiety can undermine it. A certain level of emotional stimulation can create an energizing feeling that can contribute to strong performances. Teachers can help by reducing stressful situations and lowering anxiety surrounding events like exams or presentations. [Margolis and McCabe, 2006] and (Bandura)*

As such, for this study, student efficacy is defined as:

- the ability of students to recognize the skills that they can rely on to help them navigate life and reach their goals
- awareness of engagement (social, emotional, intellectual)

Teacher efficacy:

- the ability of teachers to recognize the skills and resources that they can rely on to help them implement (design, plan, deliver, reflect) quality integrated learning experiences

Mentorship:

- a symbiotic relationship between professionals whereas one is identified as having desirable skills for development (protége/protége) and one is identified and a “knowledgeable peer” (mentor) that has expertise (skills, knowledge, or experience) that complements the needs of the protégée, and by which the benefits are professional, personal and emotional.

Literature Review

Section A:
Adult Learning

The needs of adults learners are notably different that those of children. Adults want their learning to be multifaceted: efficient, convenient, wider-reaching toward success, flexible to accommodate their lifestyles, and in the end produce a happier self (Herman & Mandell, 2003). Professional learning in adults tends to be better received and more effective when it can be applied to the learner's context and is directly linked to their own practice (Aderibigbe, Colucci-Gray, Gray, 2014). Strategies that are highly praised involve reflection on individual practice and the ability to make decisions about how new information can be adapted and implemented into individual contexts.

However, while adults have different motivations for learning, there are some noted similarities in adult and child learners alike. Individuals learn differently. It is the job of teachers, whether of children or adults, to help students see what is possible for learning and deliver it in a way that is practical and contemplative. (Herman & Mandell, 2003).

Section B:
general ideas about learning communities

Learning communities have the greatest success rate and high rate of satisfaction when the membership includes leaders. These leaders are seen not only as understanding participants, but active, engaged facilitators that have the power and authority to "make things happen" (CEPA, 2003; Hilton et al, 2015).

Aderibigbe, Colucci-Gray, and Gray, 2014, note that teacher learning and development cannot only be improved, but enhanced by a culture that promotes collaboration, sharing ideas, implementing ideas and reflecting upon practices.

Section C:
Mentorship

In many ways, what adults learn from universities or post-secondary education does not support them to learn and function within the individual context variables (rules and values), and these need to be supported by others in the same context (Aderibigbe, Colucci-Gray & Gray, 2014).

Mentorship is an old concept that comes from ancient Greek times. It is a concept that can be found in various sectors including business (Phillips, N. & Fragoulis, I., 2010), medicine, dentistry (Schrubbe, 2003), and education and valued as a vehicle for staff development. Various terms are used synonymously with mentorship and identify the mentor using a number of titles and roles: peer leader, senior, learning coach, advocate, trusted friend, role model (Colvin & Ashman, 2010.)

Definitions are also varied from rigid to more general. There is some warning that mentorship has become and overused, under defined term or catchphrase for any activity where an older colleague guides another (Schatz, 2000).

Multiple resources identify the roles and responsibilities of the mentor and protége, as well as aptitudes of each. Many list the foundation of mentoring as the aptitudes of mentor; knowledgeable and yet still learning (Herman & Mandell, 2003), sharing of responsibilities and yet willing to acknowledge dividing roles. Characteristics of successful protéges include demonstrating and interest in success, standing

out from the crowd, the ability to form intimate relationships with adults in professional contexts, and demonstrating leadership qualities. Successful mentors demonstrate competence, confidence, and commitment (Schrubbe, 2003). The balance of roles is not necessarily an equal one as literature reviews between 1962 and 1983 indicated that the mentor's characteristics were a heavy determinant of success (Schatz, 2000).

Risks and obstacles to mentoring are documented in all sectors where mentorship is used for development on human capital. Time constraints, adherence to roles, vulnerability, rejection of mentor, over dependence, power differentials, resistance to feedback or to accept challenges, disloyalty, supervisory roles, and lack of willingness to see other perspectives are commonly viewed hurdles (Colvin & Ashman, 2010; Inzer & Crawford, 2005).

Generally, forms of mentorship fall into 2 categories: formal and informal. Chao, Waltz and Gardner (1992), identified two types of mentoring: formal (programmes) and informal (natural or traditional). Within these models, there are various schemes, some of which apply to developmental levels and/or organizational analysis (Ehrich, Hansford & Tennent, 2001). Informal mentoring looks at the directionality of relationships (Inzer & Crawford, 2005) whereby mentors may seek protéges and protéges may intentionally seek mentors. The directionality of mentorship relationships also influences the weighting of the desired outcomes; friendship, support, knowledge & skills, opportunity.

In our context, there was an increasing need to find "a flexible concept with potential for a variety of applications" (Cove, McAdam and McGongial, 2007). While multiple resources site the benefits of a dialogical approach, the principles of Socratic dialogue (Herman & Mandell, 2003) allow for flexibility within 6 stated principles. As well, these was noted deficiencies when it comes to mentor preparation. In fact, there appeared to be many instances of when mentoring is done by practicing: learn by doing (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015).

The added value of mentorship came from the symbolic nature of the mentorship relationship whereby both mentor and protége benefit. Hargreaves and Fullen noted the benefits mentors receive in the forms of renewed enthusiasm, greater insight into their own skills and competencies, satisfaction of developing new relationships and greater commitment to their careers. Benefits also exceed the individuals themselves and extend to the organization (Phillips & Fragoulis, 2010).

Methodology

a. Description of Research Procedure Journey (A Personal Reflection)

This 3-year study focused on the capacity and confidence of teachers to plan, deliver and assess integrated learning experiences for students. The study aimed at identifying how various strategies within mentorship affected the teachers' experiences. This model echoes the cyclical practices of IMTPG as it allows for design, enactment, reflection and evaluation. As well, conducting the study over three years has provided time for the learning to compound, be recursive and iterative (Hilton et. al., 2015).

The Journey

When I began this action research project, I had some experience with action research. I had written research questions, defined parameters, set goals and success measures, designated tools to measure these outcomes and analyzed results before presenting the final report. What I had not done was challenge myself as a researcher to truly ask: what did I want out of the research process.

At the start of the project, my goal seemed genuine: to find out how to increase the quantity and quality of integrated teaching and learning opportunities. Now, four years later, I recognize how superficial that goal may have been. What I really wanted to know was how I, as an administrator, could use my

abilities to support teachers and what types of activities were catalysts for them as learners. Of course, this did not come to light until the last 2 years, when undoubtedly the most learning happened for me.

The Wrong Way and Why

The foundation of any action research project is to have a strong, focused question. The question should guide the researcher and keep them anchored to the concepts linked to that path of inquiry. Fault Number One: the resolution of the question needs to focused on what I would late call “small town” instead of “global”. What I thought was a good question: how and to what extent does A influence B, turned out to be more like how does the land and ocean affect the globe?

At the start of this project, all core teachers were asked to indicate the number of times over the previous year they used the identified integration 15 strategies. A suggested score of 10 was considered to reflect 10 teaching months within a school year. The thought was that if the researcher was inputting mentorship effectively, the output would be an increase in the number of integrated teaching and learning opportunities. This was Fault Number Two: quantity does not necessarily indicate improvement. Fault Number Three: the number is subjectively reported and there were many influencing factors including memory, wanting to please the researcher, over-reporting of incidents (one teacher had reported over 350 activities in a 190-day school year).

Surveys were then discussed with individual teachers to see what integration strategy(ies) were identified for improvement and who could be identified as a knowledgeable peer in this area. Through discussion, knowledgeable peers were identified. The type of activities the pari could engaged in were not defined, and were allowed to flourish organically as needed. YEAR 1 FOCUS: identify 15 integrated learning strategies, collect baseline data, identify knowledgeable peers, facilitate mentorship relationships. This was indeed done. At the end of year 1, the same surveys were again done to compare the start of year one numbers with the end of year one numbers. Review Fault Number Two.

The YEAR 2 FOCUS was to identify working models of mentorship (formal/informal), identify new information from year 1, identify areas of improvement for mentorship practice, discuss results with colleagues and external sources for input. Again, surveys were completed for new staff only since returning staff had survey data from year one. Fault Number Four: data must be comparable to indeed do comparisons. What do I with staff who taught one core class in comparison to teachers who taught two core classes? Would gym classes now count, even though it was half the time? Exempt teacher who did not have two core classes consistently throughout the length of the study? I guess I repeat Faulty Number Two without a better course of action. Fault Number Five: The numbers will accurately report the results. With only a limited number of teachers in our small school (one school in the division), the fewer people I included, the more the numbers skewed the actual information. If two out of the ten teachers failed to return the end survey, I was already missing 20% of the required information. The quantitative data collection became more problematic and less informative and I became less and less excited to crunch seemingly arbitrary numbers. Needless to say, year two surveys for the end of the year were collected…go with what I knew. Fault Number Six: do not continue to do what you suspect is not working.

The Right Detour

The intended info year of this project was “Year 3”. YEAR 3 FOCUS was to fine tune mentorship relationships, revisit data, look for peer input in an attempt to culminate the data and come to some conclusions. Indeed this is what happened, but in a much more scenic, emotionally-charged, sweat-ridden, passion-driven, guided and rewarding route. The irony here is that in the three years of this project, the researcher was looking one direction to support mentorship, but badly required the same type of relationship to correct the aforementioned faults of the study and truly bring the study to life.

In reaching out to university partners, the researcher was able to discuss the work done up to year three with fresh minds. The first meeting was the opening of a door: wide, daunting, promising, and self-directed. While there was substance to the previous years' work, there needed to be some fine-tuning and correction, re-visioning and defining. The biggest benefit of this meeting was being able to identify those "knowledgeable peers" and establish the trustful relationship so key to this study.

Step one was to correct Fault Number One. The research question went from "global" to "small town" through discussion and definition of key terms. The question of Fault Number Two was a bit of a shock, but it made sense: I knew that quantity did not equate quality, nor did it really tell me as a researcher what I wanted to know. Therefore, the surveys would not be the best source of data for my study. The questions posed by my own mentor challenged me to think around and through what I really wanted to know, and that helped define my question even further. It also drove my inquisition deeper. What did I really want to know and why?

By getting rid of the surveys, I was able to rid myself of Faults Numbers Two through Five. However, that created a new challenge: how did I get the information I really **did** want? Address Fault Number Six. What worked for other researchers? Examining mentorship from other angles meant understanding the methods of other researchers. The amount of reading I undertook mounted and continued to mount: what did the literature say about mentorship? How were the studies conducted and how could I accurately collect the information that would tell me which mentorship strategies were beneficial? Only through asking the participants about their experiences within the definitions of the research would this information be possible.

Fault Number Seven: people are wiling to talk about their work. When I discussed the exit surveys with the university mentors, I was certain that our teachers would love to talk about their work. The notion of ethics in research was not new to me, but until this point it truly never occurred to me that the study would include conducting exit surveys and decoding their content, let alone that I could not conduct these myself. After writing a study description along with permission form, securing an interviewer and someone to transcribe the interview, I distributed the invitations letters. Then, I excitedly waited for the data to roll in. It did not. With only 2 volunteers, it looked like collecting data for my study of three years, now stretching into four, was not going to happen. I had to question why this hurdle had suddenly arisen.

After a few months, colleagues began to ask about my results, only to learn I could not complete my project due to lack of data. Only then did I understand the issues. There were many disconnects in understanding about research methodology between myself and the teachers. Some teachers did not understand the ethical parameters and so interpreted the outside interviewer as a "really serious step up" they did not want to be part of. Other teachers, whom I know prefer to take time to think about responses and decisions, voiced concerns over not knowing what the interviewer would ask. One later respondent asked me if I was going to publish my findings, and at the time I thought I may be interested in such a task. However, that possibility frightened the individual who felt that our small school environment would surely mean identification. Time parameters were not cited as an issue, nor was disinterest in the project. There were issues of comfort and understanding that needed to be identified. Once identified, the data-collection could be re-designed.

With the help of my mentor, I reworked the open-ended survey questions into a Likert scale-type online survey. Before inviting participants with a reworked invitation, I spoke with my colleagues openly about my research journey. Pitfalls were openly identified. Challenges were overcome. Persistence was required. There was doubt. There was frustration. More importantly, the process of learning was emphasized. I not only learned from my experience, but wanted them to learn from my mistakes (as mis-guided as that may seem). I wanted a deeper understanding for the teachers as part of a research team.

I was clear that there was the stubbornness within me that dictated something must be gleaned from the work of the past 3.5 years, in addition to the journey. I had already learned a great deal about the action in research, but I wanted more. I wanted to know how the actual work I had invested in mentorship had affected them, and how this data could inform my future support in their roles as teachers. In this discussion, the epiphany happened: their input, while optional, was the only way for me to determine what worked for them. Within 2 weeks, 13 responses were received: over 90% participation rate.

b. Research Design and Procedures Used

The modes of mentorship used were based on the framework of Lansberg, 1996, and included 4 main areas:

- coaching (role or skill focused on the development of attitudes and performance) via the competency model of skill building, socio-cultural learning of values and norms, and reflective practice
- facilitating (enabling action in new contexts) via access to professional development, dialogue, co-development of year plans and project plans, modelling of lessons, scaffolding
- counselling (provision of social and emotional support) via reflective practices, praise and affirmation, public and private acknowledgement of work
- networking (extending collaborative practices) via POD planning supports, apprenticeship models through mentor teachers and POD partners, formal mentorship

Many of these techniques agreed with or overlapped with business practices of mentorship (Phillips, N. & Fragoulis, I., 2010).

b. Sources of Data - Quantitative

Exit Survey: Anonymous Online Survey (implemented)

c. Sources of Data - Qualitative

Of important note is the diversity in which each of the participants in the study works. While all participants worked within the same culture and school, their assigned roles (grade, subject), comfort with colleagues, preferred learning modalities, teaching strengths and motivations were all unique. As such, opportunities to collect these unique characteristics and experiences were deliberately chosen: informal entrance interviews, class visits, discussions, guided reflection and formal exit surveys. While surveys and workshop sharing methods were also included in the professional environment, they did not contribute to the determination of which mentorship strategies were having the greatest impact and how this influence was creating change.

Teacher Interview Inquiry Questions (planned but not implemented)

Pre-Interview Prompts Info sheet (Interview locations) Consent Form Pre-Interview Prompts	Set a foundation.	Tell me about your most rewarding experience as a teacher. Describe your teaching strengths. Tell me about a time when you used integrated teaching. In what ways have your students benefitted from integrated learning experiences?

Coaching	How has coaching influenced your use of integrated curricular skills to impact student success?	Describe a time when a colleague helped you understand the values within your school context in regards to integration. Tell me about how colleagues have shaped your understanding of integrated teaching norms at your school. How has working with colleagues on integrated learning and teaching increased your feeling of competency? Describe a time when a colleague has initiated a conversation about their own experiences with integrated teaching and learning.
Facilitiating	How has facilitating influenced your use of integrated curricular skills to impact student success?	Tell me about a time when you have been encouraged to try a new integrated teaching activity. Describe a collegial professional development activity that supported your capacity to deliver an integrated learning activity. Describe a time when a dialogue with a peer opened new opportunities or introduced new ideas. Identify a time when you and colleague have co-developed an integrated learning experience. What benefits did you experience in this activity? Tell me about a time when a colleague modelled the process for integrated learning and what you learned from viewing this. Describe a time when you worked with a colleague to scaffold the process of integrated teaching. What benefits did this have for you?
Counselling	How has counselling influenced your use of integrated curricular skills to impact student success?	Describe a time when social or emotional support has aided you in designing or delivering an integrated learning experience. Tell me about a time you received an expression of appreciation for the quality of your integrated teaching experience from a peer. Recount a time when a parent provided positive feedback about an integrated learning experience you provided. Depict a time when you reflected with a colleague about an integrated learning experience. What you were able to take away that helped you in the future?

Networking	How has networking influenced your use of integrated curricular skills to impact student success?	Share some of the activities you engage in to collaborate with colleagues. When thinking about integrated teaching and learning, describe how POD planning has affected your confidence and/or capacity. Describe a time when a knowledgeable peer has helped you with integrated teaching and learning? What benefits are you getting from mentors or mentorship in your environment?

Results

Question 1 Focus: Coaching

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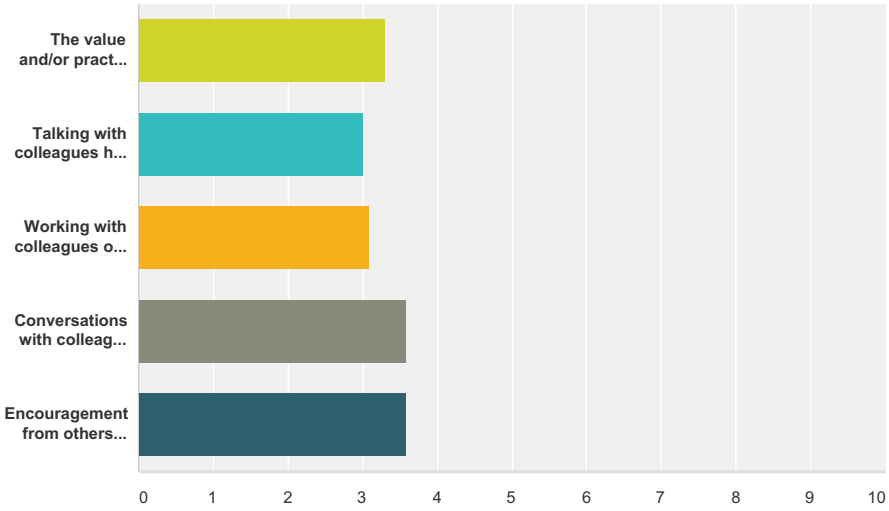
Q1 Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these indicators.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



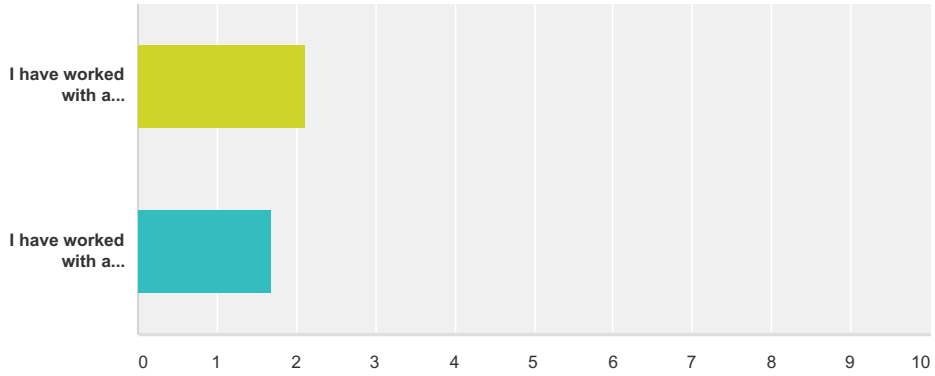
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	This strategy does not apply to me.	Total	Weighted Average
The value and/or practice of integrated teaching at our school was shared with me by colleagues.	**40.00%** 4	**50.00%** 5	**10.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.30
Talking with colleagues has shaped my practice of integrated teaching.	**30.00%** 3	**60.00%** 6	**10.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.00
Working with colleagues on integrated learning and teaching has increased my feeling of competence.	**40.00%** 4	**40.00%** 4	**10.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**10.00%** 1	10	3.10
Conversations with colleagues about their own experiences with integrated teaching and learning assisted me in my practice.	**50.00%** 5	**40.00%** 4	**10.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.60
Encouragement from others (compliments, praise, invitation for discussion) has prompted me to try a new integrated teaching activity or project.	**50.00%** 5	**40.00%** 4	**10.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.60

Questions 2 and 3 Focus: Facilitating

Gordon PLP Mentorship/Integration Study

Q2 In the past three years, how frequently have you used the following strategies?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



	This is part of my regular practice (one every 2 weeks)	Frequently (once month)	Sometimes (once a term)	Rarely (one to twice a year)	I have not done these activities.	Total	Weighted Average
I have worked with a colleague to co-develop an integrated learning experience.	**0.00%** 0	**40.00%** 4	**30.00%** 3	**30.00%** 3	**0.00%** 0	10	2.10
I have worked with a colleague to scaffold the process of integrated teaching (planning through the linking of concepts).	**0.00%** 0	**20.00%** 2	**30.00%** 3	**50.00%** 5	**0.00%** 0	10	1.70

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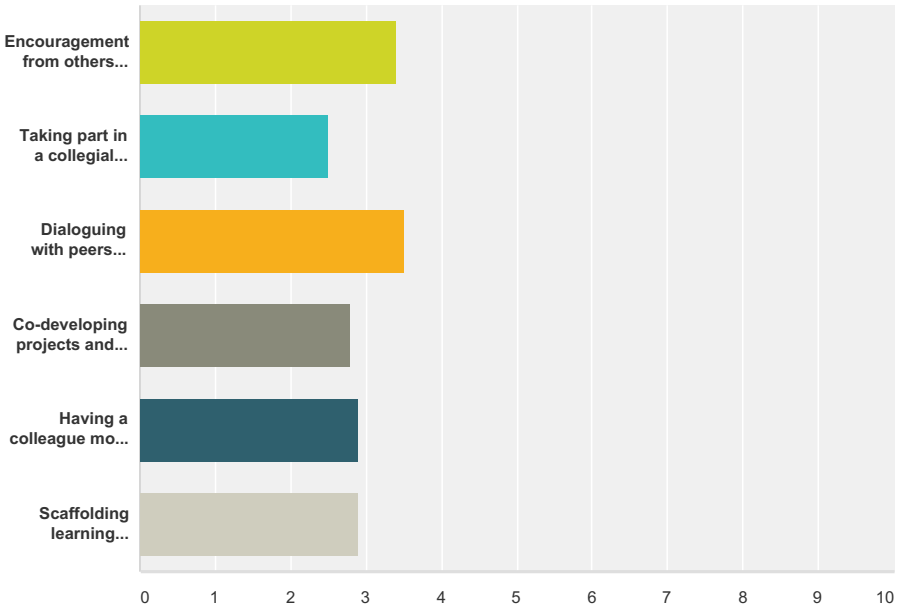
Q3 Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these indicators.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



	Strongly agree	Agee	Disagree	Strongly disagree	This strategy does not apply to me.	Total	Weighted Average
Encouragement from others (compliments, praise, invitation for discussion) has prompted me to try a new integrated teaching activity or project.	**50.00%** 5	**40.00%** 4	**10.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.40
Taking part in a collegial professional development activity (learning done with others) has supported my capacity to deliver an integrated learning activity.	**20.00%** 2	**40.00%** 4	**20.00%** 2	**10.00%** 1	**10.00%** 1	10	2.50
Dialoguing with peers (having a conversation to learn from others) has opened new opportunities or introduced new ideas for me.	**50.00%** 5	**50.00%** 5	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.50
Co-developing projects and/or learning experiences has been beneficial to me.	**30.00%** 3	**50.00%** 5	**0.00%** 0	**10.00%** 1	**10.00%** 1	10	2.80
Having a colleague model a process for integrated learning has been of benefit to me.	**20.00%** 2	**70.00%** 7	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**10.00%** 1	10	2.90
Scaffolding learning (organizing levels of ability or order of skills) has been beneficial to me.	**10.00%** 1	**70.00%** 7	**20.00%** 2	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	2.90

Questions 4 and 5 Focus: Counselling

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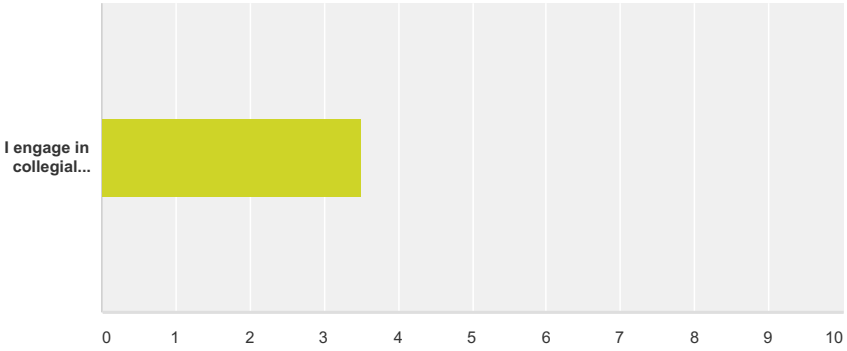
Q4 In the past three years, how frequently have you used the following strategies?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



	This is part of my regular practice (one every 2 weeks)	Frequently (once month)	Sometimes (once a term)	Rarely (one to twice a year)	I have not done these activities.	Total	Weighted Average
I engage in collegial conversations (talking with a colleague about teaching and learning).	**50.00%** 5	**50.00%** 5	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.50

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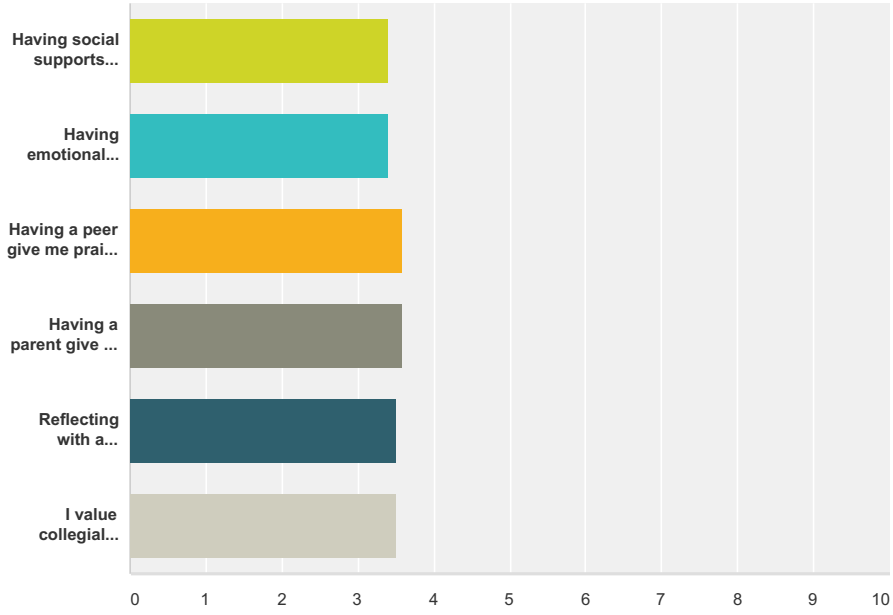
Q5 Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these indicators.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	This strategy does not apply to me.	Total	Weighted Average
Having social supports (talking about projects and problem solving) has aided me in designing or delivering an integrated learning experience.	**40.00%** 4	**60.00%** 6	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.40
Having emotional supports (encouragement and praise) has aided me in designing or delivering an integrated learning experience.	**40.00%** 4	**60.00%** 6	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.40
Having a peer give me praise or positive feedback about a specific project or the quality of my integrated teaching experience has influenced my feeling of competency.	**60.00%** 6	**40.00%** 4	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.60
Having a parent give me praise or positive feedback about a specific project or the quality of my integrated teaching experience has influenced my feeling of competency.	**60.00%** 6	**40.00%** 4	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.60
Reflecting with a colleague about an integrated learning experience has been beneficial to me.	**50.00%** 5	**50.00%** 5	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.50
I value collegial conversations (talking with a colleague about teaching and learning) because I am able to take away things to use in the future.	**50.00%** 5	**50.00%** 5	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.50

Question 6 Focus: Networking

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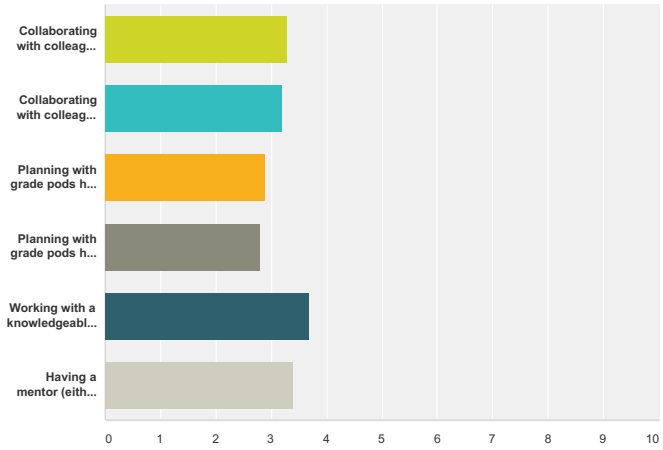
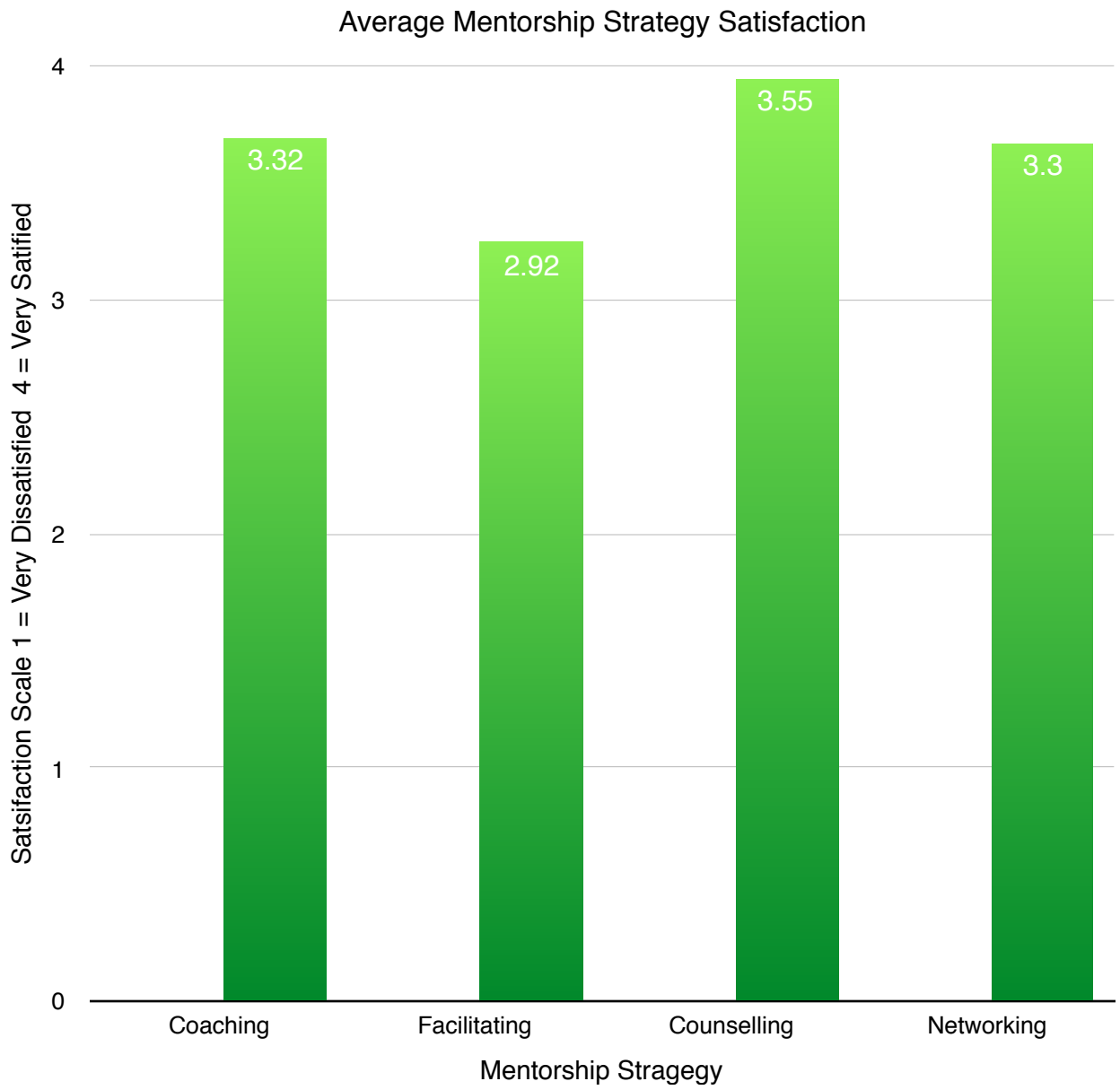
Q6 Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these indicators.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	This strategy does not apply to me.	Total	Weighted Average
Collaborating with colleagues on a project or task has increased my feeling of competence with integrated learning and teaching: I feel I have the ability to be successful.	**50.00%** 5	**40.00%** 4	**0.00%** 0	**10.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	10	3.30
Collaborating with colleagues on a project or task has increased my capacity with integrated learning and teaching: I feel I have the skills needed to be successful.	**50.00%** 5	**30.00%** 3	**10.00%** 1	**10.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	10	3.20
Planning with grade pods has increased my confidence with integrated teaching: I believe I can be successful.	**20.00%** 2	**60.00%** 6	**10.00%** 1	**10.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	10	2.90
Planning with grade pods has increased my capacity with integrated teaching: I feel I have the necessary skills to be successful.	**20.00%** 2	**50.00%** 5	**20.00%** 2	**10.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	10	2.80
Working with a knowledgeable peer (someone who has greater experience or knowledge) has helped me with integrated teaching and learning.	**70.00%** 7	**30.00%** 3	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.70
Having a mentor (either now or in the past) or engaging in mentorship (now or in the past) has assisted me with integrated learning and teaching.	**50.00%** 5	**40.00%** 4	**10.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	10	3.40


Average Mentorship Strategy Satisfaction
Satsifaction Scale 1 = Very Dissatisfied 4 = Very Satified
4
3
2
1
0
3.32
2.92
3.55
3.3
Coaching
Facilitating
Counselling
Networking
Mentorship Stragegy

Discussion

Teachers reported that counselling mentorship strategies were the most effective for them and that facilitating strategies were the least effective. In fact 100% of respondents indicated they used counselling strategies to support practices weekly-monthly. Comparatively, only 30% of respondents indicated they used facilitating strategies as little as once a month, and 70% of respondents indicated they used facilitating strategies even less frequently or never. From least of most effective, the strategies ranked: facilitating, networking, coaching, and counselling.

Within facilitating strategies, the least beneficial activity included taking part in a collegial professional development group. This was also the lowest rank strategy in the entire survey. The span of scores showed a full category difference: 1.0. Co-developing projects, having a colleague model a process for integration, and scaffolding skills were also seen as low-yield activities. There is a notable gap between these strategies and the ones that respondents did find effective: dialoguing to learn from others and receiving encouragement from others. These findings are of specific interest as teachers have requested collegial professional development activities and time to visit classrooms of colleagues to watch a strategy or activity.

The assessment of benefit for coaching and networking was very similar. The scores within coaching were particularly close with a spread of only 0.6 on a 4 point scale. It was noted that of the coaching strategies, talking with colleagues was seen as having benefit, but not as much as working with them on the activities, conversing with peers after the lesson, or receiving encouragement or compliments. This reinforces the research that emphasizes that protéges must be willing to do the work in order to receive the benefit.

Within the networking strategies, the scores ranged from 2.80 (not seen as beneficial) to 3.70 (very beneficial). Planning with grade pods was viewed as a low-yield strategy. This would agree with observational data taken by the researcher. Planning with peers did not equate to implementation, ownership of integrated learning, or satisfaction by teachers or students. Pod planning also did not increase confidence as reported by respondents. Collaborating with peers was reported to increase both respondent confidence and capacity to offer integrated learning strategies. The highest yield strategy (reported both in this category and in the study) was working with a peer that is knowledgeable (mentor), one as seen as having more experience in a specific area. Working with this person was also reported as being of assistance with integrated learning and teaching.

The highest yielding category for influencing integrated teaching and learning was counselling, and respondents reported taking part in this monthly to weekly. This area has the lowest span of scores; being just 0.2 difference. Each strategy listed in this category was reported as having benefit; no respondents reporting disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with any of the statements. Social and emotional supports were found to be beneficial in designing integrated experiences. Reflecting with peers was seen as more beneficial. Notably, respondents indicated that in order to increase their feeling of competence, praise must be received from peers or parents. This was of particular interest since the researcher has seen teachers seek out the input of those they view as knowledgeable peers, looking for their expertise. However, the consulted teacher does not report that having a colleague seek their expertise or emulate their work is as influential in establishing their feeling of competence.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of the mentorship relationship was firmly based in trust. (Landsberg, 2015)

The effectiveness of the mentorship strategy relies on the assumptions that the protége wishes to help him/herself and that they are open and receptive to feedback.

A mentorship relationship is a highly effective catalyst when the protége wants to improve practice, can identify and work with a trusted peer, and is willing to do the work and then discuss.

The most effective mentorship strategy is counselling and is the most frequently used.

Recommendations & Applications

Recommendations include:
- discontinue POD planning
- facilitate class visits only from staff who request it
- give more consistent feedback as a knowledge peer via regular classroom supervision visits
- establish times for staff to be reflective and model reflective practice
- create a definition of collaborative practice whereby a team of staff contribute to the development of a student
- integrate Landsberg's continuum of the ask/tell repertoire based on the protége's willingness and ability to help him/herself
- learn more about adult learning and what motivates adults to learn and change practice
- establish procedures that promote collaboration, sharing ideas, implementing ideas and reflecting upon practices

Using these findings, this researcher has implemented the following applications:
- workshop times with knowledgeable colleagues to assist with development of pedagogy and increase confidence.
- workshop structure allows teachers to explain the goals of the lessons and to view student work as evidence of quality and learning. Colleagues may also view the student work for evidence of learning.
- workshop structure also includes time to discuss and develop with colleagues; sharing ideas for implementation.
- workshop and informal meetings encourage teachers to engage in reflective practice with others.
- workshop structure promotes praise from peers which is seen to improve competence.
- weekly informal class visits to offer social and emotional support. Administration is working in classrooms and supporting students with the activities led by the teacher.
- the weekly timetable is divided so that a team of teachers work with students and can discuss the evidence of learning for individual students.
- scaffolding of content is done by administration with open invitation to teachers. Since many teachers do not find engaging in the scaffolding process as helpful, it is better to have the scaffolded resources available.

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