
The Professional Practice of Mentoring

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Mentoring of novice teachers has become a prevalent component of programs that help beginning teachers. A conceptualization of mentoring practice that rests on a shared vision of good mentoring, however, needs to be developed so that novice teachers receive more than emotional support or professional socialization. Knowing how to be a good mentor is not necessarily inherent in being a good teacher. How should good mentoring be conceptualized, and what images help shape that conceptualization? This article draws on data from a cross-national study of preservice and beginning teachers and their mentors to examine these questions. It concludes that, much like teaching, mentoring that is aimed at helping novices learn to teach is a professional practice with a repertoire of skill sets that must be learned over time.

This article is about the possibilities that mentors have to create and shape opportunities for novice teachers' learning based on a conceptualization that these possibilities exist within a practice of mentoring. While mentoring has been associated with many different purposes—emotional support, occupational socialization, and pedagogical guidance, for example—the practice of mentoring is well suited to helping novices learn the practice of teaching.¹ Situated in the context of teaching and in a relationship between a novice and a more knowledgeable other,² mentor teachers can help novices get inside the intellectual and practical tasks of teaching. Ideally they can also help novices develop the skills and dispositions to continue learning in and from their practice.

The purpose of this article is to shape a conceptualization of mentoring as a professional practice. Similar to other professional practices, mentoring encompasses knowledge and skills that must be learned and is grounded by shared visions of what “good practice” means and entails. This article works toward shaping a shared vision by presenting a conceptualization of mentoring as a practice that engages novice teachers in the intellectual work of teaching, striving to instill in them intellectual habits that foster student learning. This

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The Professional Practice of Mentoring

conceptualization is developed not only from a theoretical stance but also through images of mentoring practice and language mentors use as they describe their practice. It is based on analyses of observations and interviews from diverse settings, abstracting from the particularities of each context to hypothesize a universe of the most important skills of mentoring. This article presents a framework of analysis of mentoring that could be the basis for additional work that would explore the framework's applicability to specific subject matter mentoring, grade levels, and other contexts.

This article begins with a discussion of educative mentoring (Feiman-Nemser 1998, 2001), which is followed by a description of the study that grounds the research. The article continues with a repertoire of forms of mentoring identified in the study. To provide a more holistic conceptualization of mentoring (Yinger 1990), the repertoire presentation is followed by an analysis and discussion. Finally, using Dewey's (1938) definition of educative experience, I argue in the last section that mentoring, conceptualized as an educative practice that depends upon mentors' professional judgment and knowledge of their novices as learners in order to shape experiences that promote novices' learning over time, must be learned over time.

Educative Mentoring

Feiman-Nemser (1998, 2001) coined the term "educative mentoring" to distinguish this kind of mentoring of novice teachers from the more conventional supervisory approach. The concept of educative mentoring is based on learning theories that depict the learner as an active participant in the learning process. Shaped by theories of socially shared cognition (Resnick 1991; Rogoff 1991; Tharp and Gallimore 1988), the concept of educative mentoring is grounded in Dewey's (1938) theory of educative experience, in which the learner interacts with her or his environment in ways that result in growth. Educative mentoring means mentors purposefully and intentionally shape

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learning opportunities for novices that lead toward better understanding of teaching, learning, and learning to teach. Educative mentoring draws from Vygotsky's (1978) and Tharp and Gallimore's (1988) theories of learning through the process of construction of knowledge guided by a knowledgeable teacher who scaffolds the learning of another until the learning is internalized. Mentors engage in educative mentoring when they go beyond emotional or psychological support and resource procurement and base their practice on the premise that learning to teach requires creating learning opportunities that involve the mentee intellectually in her or his "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky 1978). Learning to teach requires more than just hand-holding—it demands involvement in and an understanding of the intellectual nature of teaching and learning to teach. Educative mentoring is a powerful method toward this kind of learning to teach (Achinstein and Athanases 2006; Feiman-Nemser et al. 1999).

Learning to teach can only be accomplished by engaging the novice teacher in authentic tasks of teaching (Ball and Cohen 1999; Feiman-Nemser and Beasley 1997b). It is necessary that novice teachers participate in essential teaching tasks, as opposed to pseudo teaching situations (Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann 1987), under the guidance of an expert in order to learn the skills of the profession (Brown et al. 1989). Schon (1987) identifies the learning predicament that exists when what is to be learned can only be done by doing tasks of the profession that one does not yet know how to do. His model of mentoring aligns with Collins et al.'s (1989) paradigm of coaching, fading, and autonomous functioning. This model is applicable to learning to teach from an educative mentoring approach as seen through Dembele's (1995) study of a secondary science teacher who not only taught her secondary students using this paradigm but also mentored her student teachers this way.

Learning the intellectual tasks of teaching requires situating that learning in the actual doing of those tasks much as an apprentice learns by watching and trying out the tasks she or he is attempting to learn (Brown et al. 1989; Lave and Wenger 1991). Through cognitive apprenticeship (Collins et al. 1989), novice teachers learn to know, think, and act like their more experienced models and mentors. Educative mentoring, then, means providing multiple and varied opportunities for novices to try out the intellectual and interactive tasks of teaching under the thoughtful and caring guidance of a more knowledgeable mentor (Noddings 1992/2005). Schon (1987) also highlights that reflection in and on practice is a necessary component of learning a profession such as teaching. Educative mentoring includes opportunities for deep and rich reflection on practice with the participation of a mentor who helps to shape and instill this intellectual habit.

Data Collection and Analysis

This article is based on data gathered in the Learning from Mentors study,³ a cross-national study of mentoring preservice and beginning teachers. This study explored the relationship between contexts of mentoring and mentoring practice. A total of 26 pairs of mentors and novices from the United States, England, and China were observed and interviewed, and in some cases the novice teachers were videotaped teaching while the mentor was present and the mentor-novice pairs were videotaped during a postteaching conference. Data also included logs of mentor-novice interactions and documents from each program. Of the 12 U.S. mentor-novice pairs, four were in an induction program and eight were in preservice programs that were located in the East, the Midwest, and the Southeast of the country. The seven English mentor-novice pairs were in suburban preservice programs, all at the middle school level. Three of the English mentors had two mentees each. The seven Chinese pairs worked in three different induction programs in a large city, four at the primary level and three at the secondary level. Of the 26 total pairs, 10 were in elementary schools and 16 were in middle school or high school secondary sites. Studying pairs across the continuum from preservice to induction-level beginning teachers and across the K-12 continuum allowed the research team to consider how levels of learning and context interfaced and affected the kinds of mentoring that could occur.

This article is an opportunity for thoughtful mentor teachers to contribute to the conversation about mentoring (see e.g., Cochran-Smith and Paris 1995; McIntyre et al. 1993; Tomlinson 1995). Unlike many texts on mentoring that feature the observations and insights of researchers, this article draws on mentors' own descriptions of and insights about their work. Mentors' intimate knowledge of their practice provides images and understandings that complement the formulations of researchers and contribute to a richer discourse about the practice of mentoring.

As part of the data-gathering process in the Learning from Mentors Study, the research team asked mentor teachers: "Suppose we wanted to make a videotape showing how you work with your novice. What would we have to videotape in order to present a realistic and rounded picture of your mentoring work?" At first, many mentors found the question hard to answer or else they responded in vague generalizations: "That would be impossible to do"; "You would have to follow us around all day . . . and even videotape our talking on the phone at night." With some probing, however, mentors became more specific as they began to describe key aspects of their work.

From these descriptions and from analysis of observations and interviews, the research team looked for patterns of mentoring actions. At the same time, the research team noted forms of mentoring that were "out of the ordinary."

From this analysis, the research team identified 10 distinct forms of mentoring (i.e., what mentors do in a dynamic mentoring practice). The pictures of practice described by the mentors in this study present fluid images of their work, anchored in knowledge of their novices as learners and in a vision of the kind of teaching they want to foster. Taken together, these help build a conceptualization of mentoring as a complex practice that is dependent on knowledge, skill, and judgment and guided by immediate and long-term purposes. The focus on practice moves us beyond role definitions to conceptions of what mentors actually do to support and guide novices' learning. Overly narrow, partial, or diffuse role definitions can limit visions of what mentors can do. Our data suggest that, because of its complexity, mentoring is a practice that must be learned, similar to other professional practices, through engaging in and reflecting on the work (Schon 1987). In order to help people learn to mentor, we must know more about conceptualizing and articulating mentoring practice, including how to create opportunities for novices' learning, that characterizes the practice. The next section will provide images of mentoring drawn from the data.

What Does Mentoring as a Professional Practice Entail?

This section draws from mentors' descriptions of their work with their novices and researchers' observations of their mentoring to present images of mentoring practices. These images illustrate the range of forms of mentoring that the research team observed, as well as the complex nature of mentors' work. Mentors talked about what they did to help their novices learn during teaching times when students were present and during times when students were not around. This analysis begins with forms of mentoring used during the interactive phase of teaching while students are present. Then it moves to forms used during the pre- and postactive phases when students are not around (Jackson 1990). A discussion of the forms as components of a professional practice follows this section.

I am not arguing that mentors should carry out all these forms of mentoring. Not all the mentors the research team studied did all the forms described, but no mentor did just one form. Learning to mentor is not simply being trained to apply different forms. Mentoring is differentiated work in that mentors determine and adjust their mentoring actions based on what they know about their learners and what needs to be learned. Learning to mentor is a process of developing a practice based on a conceptual stance toward mentoring. None of the forms that the research team observed in the course of the study were particularly new in and of themselves. The varied forms presented in this article show a range of activities in which mentors and novices

The Professional Practice of Mentoring

engaged. Together they form a repertoire of mentoring moves from which a mentor can draw as a preconceived plan or as improvisation for a novice's learning. Seen holistically, they suggest the complexity of mentoring and support a conceptualization of practice.

Coaching and Stepping In

When the novice was teaching, some mentors, most particularly the U.S. mentors, positioned themselves so that they could offer advice and suggestions or be available so that the novice could ask for help in the middle of the lesson through a knowing glance or a question posed to the mentor. Sometimes the mentor and novice would come together quickly to confer about how the lesson was going, how they thought the pupils were responding, or what should happen next. At times, a mentor moved right into the novice's lesson, briefly taking over the teaching before turning things back to the novice. One mentor described this elaborate set of skills in the following way:

Throughout the whole lesson you'd see me coaching, [my novice] asking questions, [me] stepping in, stepping out, that kind of thing going on during the lesson. Also, you'd see us assessing during the lesson. I mean saying, "Oh, this is going really well," or "What's going on? Why?" We'd be doing that kind of stuff, on-the-spot kinds of things.

This mentor paints a picture of a high level of mentoring activity while teaching is occurring. We can visualize this mentor paying close attention to what the novice is doing and saying while watching for opportunities to offer suggestions. For this to work, the novice must be comfortable asking the mentor questions about what to do even while the lesson is going on, and the mentor must be ready to respond. Sometimes the mentor took over parts of the lesson, when that seemed like a good way to move the lesson along, even while she conveyed her thinking and teaching actions to the novice. Sometimes the mentor and the novice huddled together, talking softly, as they "assessed" the lesson and decided what direction it should take. We get a picture, then, of mentor and novice moving around the classroom, sometimes being in different places while one of them, mainly the novice, is leading the lesson, and at other times being in the same place so they can talk about what is happening. Sometimes the movement involves an exchange of places, as when the mentor "steps in" to teach or "steps out" so that the novice can resume the lesson. We can hear the mentor and novice talking "over the heads" of the students as the mentor coaches from the "sidelines" or the novice asks her questions.

Some mentors and novices were so attuned to each other that an exchange

of knowing glances would cue the mentor to provide the novice with some help on the spot.

What you would see is us looking at each other. . . . He knows my look. “Is this the way to go?” Or “Hey, I need help.” Or “You take this down.” In other words, we don’t have to verbalize so much now. It’s a physical kind of communicating—mannerisms.

Communicating through gestures and facial expressions helped this mentor and this novice respond to each other as they were simultaneously involved in teaching. Commenting on the same phenomenon, another mentor offered the following description:

We had a lot of things that we did. We would exchange looks. She [the novice] had this look like I knew she didn’t know what to say or do and that I should step in and do something. . . . Sometimes she would just cue me in and say, “Well, Ms. Kramer,⁴ what do you think?” Sometimes she’d come over and ask [me a question]. We’d sort of be standing there, these two giants in the middle of these little people, saying, “What do you think?” And sometimes I would tell her and other times she would still say, “I think I want to watch you do this.”

We get a sense from this description of the complexity of a mentoring episode that involves monitoring the novice’s looks, interpreting her questions, and understanding her uncertainties. Through nonverbal and verbal interactions, the novice cued her mentor to coach her through teaching situations when she did not know what to do. At the same time, the mentor chose her responses—sometimes stepping into the lesson herself and demonstrating, sometimes telling her novice what to do, and sometimes conferring in the middle of the room while the children continued working. Similar to Schon’s (1987) “reflection-in-action,” to work this way, a mentor must be able to assess a lesson’s progress and decide when and how to coach the novice in order to foster her learning.

Several mentors distinguished different mentoring techniques while the novice was teaching. One mentor said she stood toward the back of the room while the novice was teaching and watched what was going on. When the novice wanted the mentor’s help, she would come to stand by the mentor so they could talk. Their talk was similar to the assessing mentioned by the mentor above. “What about this?” Or “This just happened, what do you think?” They worked at making sense of what was happening and how the novice might respond. The research team took language from the mentor above who called her actions “coaching” (a term that Schon [1987] uses also as in “re-

The Professional Practice of Mentoring

flective coaching”). Assessing a lesson in progress with the novice was one form of coaching by the mentor.

A different mentor used more subtle coaching techniques—mouthing suggestions to the novice about what to do next and what to say.

During a lesson, sometimes I would just mouth [something]. The kids would say something and I'd say [to her] in a whisper “Any other ideas?” Then she would say, “Are there any other ideas?” It was just sort of helping her to keep going.

These coaching techniques helped the novice to keep the lessons afloat.

Generally, mentors who coached novices while they were teaching waited for the novice to signal that they did not know what to do or say next. Still, some mentors in the study made more assertive coaching moves by “stepping in” to the novice’s lesson, a term used by several U.S. mentors. These mentors assumed that their novices could handle this kind of direct intervention. Not all mentors were comfortable doing this. Some preferred to be available in the room, so that the novice could come over and ask a quick question. These mentors shied away from intervening directly in the lesson. Those who did step into their novice’s lessons offered various reasons for doing so. One mentor did not want his novice to be “put on the spot” by questions he might ask her, so he directed questions to the pupils instead. He described this technique to us.

During the lesson, I'll ask students a question. So instead of putting her (the novice) on the spot, I'll put them on the spot. But she'll be thinking about the question, too, obviously. And she'll be standing there thinking, “Should I have asked that?”

This mentor chose a way to step into the novice’s lessons that would help her to see how questions could push pupil’s thinking, without undermining her role as the lead teacher. Although he avoided speaking to the novice directly, this mentor expected that his questioning of pupils during the novice’s lesson would cause her to take notice and think about her own teaching.

Teaching Together

Teaching together, or what the research team called “collaborative teaching” or “coteaching,” also emerged as a mentoring skill in the action of teaching.

Sometimes this involved the mentor and the novice teaching the class alongside one another, as one mentor told us:

Collaborative teaching is really where both of you are involved in the lesson. So maybe the novice would start the lesson, and you would do it along with him. Or maybe you're both going around helping the students.

Here we have an image of a mentor and a novice standing side by side, teaching together. Both are involved in the action, taking turns with the leading role and circulating around while students work on their assignment.

As the name suggests, coteaching means that the mentor and novice teach together as partners, sharing the leadership of the lesson. One person begins the lesson, and then the other leads another portion. The leadership may shift several times during the course of the lesson. Determining who will lead which portion of the lesson is often done prior to teaching. The mentors in this study provided a window into this kind of mentoring. Roth and Tobin (2002) offer an extended and vivid portrait of two researchers who coteach with each other and with experienced as well as novice teachers. Through their eyes, we see and feel the struggles, the professional intimacy, and the deep learning that can be a result of coteaching and the cogenerative discussion that supports it.

One mentor described a different approach to coteaching. She told the research team that sometimes she takes a group of students and teaches the lesson while her novice teaches the rest of the class. This is more like “parallel” teaching, in which both mentor and novice teach part of the class at the same time. The mentor describes:

We weren't actually collaboratively teaching in the sense that we were both involved with the same kids. We were both in the same room. I had a group doing this, and he had the other group doing that.

The research team observed similar forms of teaching together between mentors and novices. Sometimes the mentor and the novice began lessons teaching side by side and then split the class into two groups so that each could work with a smaller group of students. Afterward, the mentor and novice usually talked about what each had observed and experienced during the whole class and during the small-group parts of the lesson. Dynak et al. (1997) identify five models of coteaching—complementary teaching, parallel teaching, station teaching, alternative teaching, and shared teaching—that can be applied to

The Professional Practice of Mentoring

novices and mentors' work together, and all of these are reflected in the pairs the research team observed.

Demonstration Teaching

Novices' teaching is not the only context for mentoring during the interactive phase of teaching. Mentors' teaching also provides a context for novices' learning. Some of the mentors in our study from all three countries deliberately and purposefully structured teaching demonstrations for their novices to observe. This modeling or demonstration of teaching differed from the "osmosis" approach, where the mentor hopes the novice will "see" and pick up on something on her or his own. The demonstrations were planned events and were prepared for by identifying what the novice should watch for and what questions the novice should ask about the mentor's "in flight" thinking and decision making. One U.S. mentor in our sample provided an example of group mentoring through demonstration teaching. To introduce student teachers to reform-minded mathematics teaching, this mentor invited a group of student teachers to observe a week of mathematics lessons. Before each lesson, the mentor and the novices met to discuss the lesson's purpose and content, the course the mentor thought the lesson would take, and her uncertainties about adapting her teaching to pupils' responses. During the lesson, the novices positioned themselves around the room, notebooks in hand to record their observations and reflections. After the lesson, they met again with the mentor to discuss what had happened, how to approach the next lesson, and what the novices were learning from the demonstrations. In this group mentoring experience, the novices had access to the mentor's classroom practice, as well as to her plan and reflection.

The research team assumed that demonstration teaching would only occur during teaching. The research team was quite surprised to see a Chinese mentor move into a teaching demonstration in the middle of her conference with her novice following a lesson. The research team was impressed with the power the mentor's demonstration had to both show and explain how she thought the concepts being taught should be represented for young children. Even without children present, during the demonstration the mentor was able to show the novice how to help children understand mathematics concepts using visual representations. The mentor skillfully eased into the demonstration as she and her novice talked about the mathematics lesson the novice had just taught. The mentor took on the roles of both teacher and pupils, so that the novice could see how the teacher's language and the representations she used led pupils from concrete to conceptual understanding. During this demonstration, the mentor modulated her voice to differentiate between what the

teacher might say and what the pupils might say. Reenacting the novice's lesson, the mentor showed how she would use the visual materials prepared by the novice in ways that were more responsive to young learners. In this teaching, the mentor not only showed the novice teaching strategies but also articulated her decisions and the reasons behind her actions. Thus, she made her thinking visible through a skillful use of demonstration with commentary.

Brief Interactions or Mentoring on the Move

Mentors described brief interactions that occurred before and after teaching in ways that helped us visualize what Dembele (1995) calls "mentoring on-the-move." For instance, one mentor interacting with two novices described how she worked with them throughout the day.

[Kelly] says, "Good morning!" And I say, "Good morning!" And she bubs out again, and then she comes back, and she says, "Oh, I've got this plan." So right there we've got two minutes, and I'm saying, "That might not work out." So she asks very direct questions, and sometimes I find myself not having a clue. And then at 8:45 I'll go in to them and say, "Hey, why don't you think about. . . ." One hour later she'll say, "That was good, I talked to [Don, the other novice] about it." So it's her, me, her, me, him, her, me, and we're bouncing all the time. Eventually they go home and come back the next day with a draft. Kelly's is beautifully drafted. Don's is scratched on the corner of an envelope, but nevertheless, the idea is projected as if they've given birth together.

This mentor highlighted the "back and forth" nature of her interactions with her novices in between teaching times as they "bounced" ideas, comments, and suggestions among each other whenever they had a few minutes together. According to this mentor, even brief interactions can add up. She believed that, if compiled into a whole piece, a clear theme or message would be apparent. She said:

It would be quite interesting to shadow [us] and then edit out all these little [interactions]. You'd have to do your own detective game and say, "Oh look, you've been talking about this and that and again here." You've added it up, and there's actually 17 minutes of talk about [some train of thought].

This mentor believed that this chain of interactions was significant to her novices' growth over the long term, even though, taken one at a time, a brief interaction may seem insignificant. She thought that they accumulated and

The Professional Practice of Mentoring

incubated, in a sense, until they developed into significant learning for her novices.

Other mentors agreed that their brief interactions with their novices throughout the day were important occasions for mentoring. Some contrasted the informal nature of these exchanges as compared with longer, more structured conversations that often occurred in scheduled meetings. One British mentor thought that the spontaneity of informal interactions gave validity to more formal mentoring conferences.

The reason that [spontaneous interactions] are so important is that they're informal. . . . Because they [the novice] feel that when they say something spontaneously and we're having a conversation, then you are responding spontaneously as opposed to setting an agenda in a mentor session, whereby I could have thought out what I'm going to say and they might think, "He's only saying that because he's thinking that that's what we should learn today." The effect on that is, of course, that your mentoring, formally, will be more effective if it doesn't contradict what you say informally. What I talk about in mentor periods accords with everything I say informally. I might use different language, but basically my ideas on teaching are the same in both instances.

According to this mentor, spontaneous and brief interactions that occur in snatches of time confirm the beliefs and perspectives on teaching that the mentor presents during more formal mentoring periods. In more formal mentoring sessions, the novice may interpret the topics of conversation as something the mentor has predetermined without due regard to the reality of the classroom or what the novice is learning. When the brief, spontaneous interactions convey the same perspectives on teaching and learning that are communicated during the more formal sessions, however, this mentor believed the novice was more likely to give credence to the substance of the more formal sessions.

Mentoring Sessions and Debriefing Sessions

Many mentors engaged in lengthier, more formal talk with their novices. This usually occurred during times that were scheduled for the mentor and the novice to talk about teaching and the novice's learning to teach. Some mentors and novices held regularly scheduled sessions, usually once a week. Lasting anywhere from 20 minutes to more than an hour, these sessions took place either in the classroom when students were gone or somewhere else in the school, such as a conference room or the teachers' lounge. Some mentors and

novices had mentoring sessions only as the need arose; others used both spontaneous and regularly scheduled sessions with a planned agenda.

The British mentors referred to sessions in which the mentor and novice talked about the novice's lesson as a "debriefing" session. This was time for the mentor to guide the novice through a reflection on either the novice's teaching or the mentor's. Some mentors identified in advance certain points that they wanted to address. The mentors were more likely to lead the conversation, moving it through the points that they had on their mind.

We sat in my room, and we specifically went through my review notes. We directly went through the various parts of the lesson and how it had gone. He [the novice] then discussed how he felt about it. . . . Hopefully they (*sic*) learn the idea of reflection.

With thoughtful guidance, this mentor hoped to teach her novice how to reflect on his teaching by analyzing his lesson together.

Other mentors managed mentoring sessions in a different way. One mentor said: "Every time we meet it's different. . . . There's no agenda. We go in and talk about whatever seems to be important to the novice." This mentor tried to follow the novice's lead, interjecting her own agenda as the opportunity arose. Highlighting the improvisational nature of her work with novices, this mentor spoke of what she called the "unconscious" way she found moments in her conversation with her novice that served as "jumping-off places" to help her novice learn something about teaching:

I look for what [the conversation] means overall. Maybe I look for it unconsciously. I don't go in and just say I'm going to look for a teachable moment, but I think I'm good at applying or seeing the big picture from the small picture and saying "What does this mean?". . . I look for chances to teach or talk about the things I consider to be important in teaching.

Reminiscent of the mentor Feiman-Nemser (2001) describes who talks about "finding openings" (20), this mentor's leadership in her conversations with her novice seemed to evolve unconsciously, yet she still had an intentional, purposeful end in view of helping the novice learn to teach. The mentor asked probing questions and looked for opportunities to push the novice's thinking in areas that she considered to be important.

Focusing on forms of mentoring without attention to the content is like looking at an artist's brush strokes without seeing what the picture is about. While talk is an important form of mentoring, we cannot ignore the substance of the conversations between a mentor and novice. The mentors gave us details about their topics of conversation and a feeling for how these conver-

The Professional Practice of Mentoring

sations were constructed. For instance, the mentor who worked “unconsciously” described how conversations about the novice’s lesson moved from a practical level specific to the lesson to a pedagogical level that the novice could apply more generally to his thinking about teaching and learning.

Recently he was doing a mock trial of Billy the Kidd. I was sitting at his desk reading the instruction sheets to the kids, and they were very involved. So when he walked back (we don’t have formal conferences, we have chatting conferences between classes or I’ll stay there and chat with him while he eats lunch), I said, “This looks very complicated.” And he said, “Well, it is, but I learned last year after doing it in student teaching to change it to make it easier for the students to understand.” Then we started talking a bit about adapting materials to meet the needs of the students and that was our jumping-off place into that.

This mentor seized the opportunity to build on the novice’s realization that his instructional materials needed to be modified to suit his particular students by guiding the substance of the “chat” to a deeper conversation about the need for teachers to be alert to adapting materials and instruction under any circumstance to reach students’ learning levels. This mentor attended to both the novice’s immediate concern about his lesson and the longer-term need for novices to learn about adaptability in the service of pupils’ learning.

Looking for opportunities to teach by talking, one mentor valued conversations with her novice because they went beyond just critiquing a lesson.

I’d observe his classes. . . . We’d sit and talk and do conferences about teaching. . . . We shared ideas, we talked philosophy of education, we talked the future of education, we talked the system and how to beat it and what’s wrong with it.

Mentors like this one looked for opportunities to extend the conversation to thinking about beliefs, visions, and educational reforms. In the scope of their work with their novices, mentors tried to help novices look “close to the classroom” by analyzing their own teaching. They also brought their novices into larger communities of professional conversation by exploring and developing perspectives on educational issues.⁵

Coplanning

Coplanning goes beyond the mentor reading and commenting on plans written by the novice. (See, e.g., Roth’s and Tobin’s [2002] descriptions of coplanning as a prerequisite to coteaching.) It means that the mentor and the novice work

together to design learning activities that lead to either the mentor or the novice or both teaching. In more conventional cooperating teacher/novice teacher situations, the cooperating teacher may assume that novices will learn to plan by working independently. The cooperating teacher may act as a critic of the plans and may suggest changes, but she or he seldom actually engages in planning with the novice, exposing his or her seasoned thinking patterns as a way to invite the novice into similar intellectual habits of design. One of the British mentors spoke about coplanning as a more active form of mentoring:

Helping them plan the lesson is collaborative. I might not actually have any direct involvement with the lesson, but I help them plan it and structure it. I think it's useful that you give them that input. They've got to learn from somewhere. It doesn't just come off the tops of their heads. . . . I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I guess that's collaborative—actually planning the lesson and discussing the structure.

This mentor recognized that novices need opportunities to learn ways of thinking and decision making associated with planning. The implication that some would say that it is “wrong” for a mentor to help a novice learn to plan by coplanning highlights the ambiguous nature of mentoring as a professional practice. Mentors often find themselves questioning whether they are doing the “right” thing for their novices. While there is no one “right” way to mentor, there are ways to think about helping a novice learn to teach that are based on theories of teaching and learning as assisted performance (Tharp and Gallimore 1988). Some mentors found that coplanning provided rich opportunities for novices to learn to design purposeful teaching and learning in the company of an experienced, knowledgeable other (Vygotsky 1978).

What did coplanning look like in practice? One U.S. elementary school mentor described a typical coplanning session in this way:

We'd be sitting at our table and we'd have our plan books. We'd have all of the books and materials and stuff around us. We'd just be sitting at this table talking, basically.

And what did they do as they sat and talked? As the research team looked across their logs and our observations, the team got a picture of the range of their activities and interactions. The mentor and novice gathered tradebooks, teaching and learning materials, previous lesson plans, and anything that might be useful to guide their thinking. They looked through these materials for ideas or analyzed them as possible texts to use in their teaching. They talked about content and purposes. What did they really want their pupils to learn?

The Professional Practice of Mentoring

Why was it important? If they found a book or an interesting idea, they questioned how it related to their goals for their students.

Once they established their purposes for the lesson or unit, the mentor and novice brainstormed ways to get pupils actively involved in thinking and doing things that would eventually lead the students to conceptual understanding. As they brainstormed, the mentor and novice revisited the books and materials, looking for the ones that would best support their purposes. They also talked about other dimensions of the lesson or unit, such as timing, management concerns, and materials that the pupils would need. Thus, they planned together, both offering ideas, insights, and information about their pupils to reach decisions about what and how to teach. This coplanning example shows how mentoring can be a form of assisted performance, enabling the novice to do with help what the novice is not ready to do alone (Collins et al. 1989; Feiman-Nemser and Beasley 1997b; Tharp and Gallimore 1988). The novice not only sees how the mentor tackles planning but also tries out her own design work with the mentor's support, guidance, and analysis. The novice's participation is assisted by the mentor as the mentor shows how an experienced teacher thinks and moves through the planning process.

Videotape Analysis

Some mentors and novices also engaged in analysis of videotapes. Sometimes the tapes showed teachers demonstrating specific kinds of teaching, such as mathematics discourse. By analyzing the other's teaching, the mentor and the novice could talk about what each saw and how they understood it. At other times, the tapes showed the novice or the mentor teaching. By analyzing their own practice, mentors and novices could recall how they were thinking and what prompted both their and the students' actions and thus gain insights into their teaching. Analysis of videotape is an accepted mentoring practice in parts of China and in several sites in the United States and England.

Writing

Some mentors and novices used journal writing as a form of mentoring. Journals provided a means of recording thoughts and questions that might otherwise be forgotten or left unspoken. Mentors and novices did not need to synchronize their schedules to interact through journals. Each could write entries according to his or her own time frame. One mentor highlighted the writing that she and her novice did:

Schwille

They [the novices] are supposed to be writing, writing, writing everything they see. . . . I'm writing back to her a lot . . . looking at the kinds of things she's picking up on and her questions.

Writing was a tool for reflection and a means of working out ideas over time. Mentors and novices could exchange their thoughts, interpretations, insights, and musings about the immediate teaching and learning in their classrooms, as well as about issues that touch broader educational communities. Novices' journals provided a unique window into their thinking and understandings. A journal provided one way for a mentor to get to know a novice that might not have been available if a mentor's and novice's interactions had been limited to verbal ones.⁶

Placing Forms of Mentoring in the Larger Frame of Practice

Looking at these images of mentoring provides a range of possibilities open to mentors in helping novices learn to teach. Looking at the forms as isolated pieces, however, does not provide an adequate picture of mentoring as a professional practice. How do these forms of mentoring add up to a more integrated practice that fosters novices' learning over time?

Learning Tasks of Teaching in Authentic Contexts

The forms of mentoring that teachers described and that the research team observed are synthesized in a temporal framework in table 1. Forms of mentoring that occurred during the interactive phase of teaching (Jackson 1990) while students were present are called "inside the action." Forms of mentoring that occurred in the pre- or postactive phases when students were not present are called "outside the action." The table does not represent an exhaustive list of forms of mentoring nor does it convey the intricate and interactive ways that mentors use these forms to shape their practice. For instance, all forms of mentoring do not fall neatly into one phase or another. For example, the research team saw mentors demonstrate teaching both inside and outside the action, which highlights the complexity of the work as well as the difficulties the research team experienced trying to capture its intricate nature. Rather than simply choosing a form of mentoring from a list, mentors must learn to improvise and adapt their practices to suit the situation and the novice's learning (Denyer 1997; Schwille 1997). Keeping an eye on the goal of helping novices learn to teach, good mentors draw from their strategic knowledge of teaching and learning to teach and their knowledge of their novice as a learner

The Professional Practice of Mentoring

TABLE 1

Forms of Mentoring by Temporal Dimensions

Forms of Mentoring	Inside the Action	Outside the Action
Coaching	X	
Stepping in	X	
Teaching together	X	
Demonstration	X	X
Brief, informal conversation or mentoring on the move		X
Mentoring sessions		X
Debriefing sessions		X
Copanning sessions		X
Videotape analysis		X
Writing		X

to create appropriate learning opportunities. The table highlights that mentoring occurs in many forms and multiple contexts. It is the effect that good mentoring has in the long run on novices' learning, however, that is important. Looking at the forms of mentoring in temporal contexts helps us to see how forms of mentoring can promote learning the tasks of teaching as they occur in natural phases of teaching.

Inside the Action

Mentoring inside the action contrasts sharply with more conventional images of mentors who assume that their role is to turn all the teaching action over to their novices and not intervene (Feiman-Nemser and Beasley 1997a). They expect novices to "learn from experience." As Buchmann and Schwille (1983) point out, however, experience without guidance and reflection can often be a fickle and misleading teacher. Moving beyond traditional supervisory roles such as peripheral supporter and advisor, mentors in this study worked side by side with their novices to help them learn the tasks of teaching as they occurred during teaching. Mentors challenged norms of noninterference in others' teaching by taking an active part in helping novices think through teaching and learning situations on the spot.

Many interactive tasks of teaching, such as facilitating student discussion that leads to conceptual understanding ("doing discourse," as one novice said), are difficult to learn outside the action. To the unknowing eye, it looks easy, but actually guiding and managing such a discussion requires complex intel-

lectual skills involving what Schon (1987) calls “reflection-in-action.” Mentors who keep close communication with novices during teaching can share their thinking, point out problems, and suggest teaching responses to novices who are in the midst of trying to listen to students’ comments and questions, interpret those accurately, and connect them to content and concepts. This guided reflection-in-action offers novices opportunities to learn ways to think and act that are attuned to pupils’ understandings at the moment.

Forms of mentoring, such as coaching, stepping in, and coteaching, help novices learn how to think on their feet, figure out in the moment how to extend and probe students’ thinking, modify the lesson content or activities based on immediate assessment, or adjust the environment in order to move toward learning goals. While these interactive teaching tasks can be anticipated to some extent beforehand, learning to respond effectively in the moment can be done only as situations actually occur. The image of the mentor and novice standing in the middle of the classroom asking each other, “What’s going on? Why? What next?” gives us a snapshot of a mentor helping a novice think through interactive tasks of teaching in an authentic, interactive context.

To be effective, novices must be receptive to mentoring inside the action. Understanding a mentor’s stepping in as an opportunity to learn how teachers think about and respond to the situation at hand, a novice is able to accept this form of mentoring as a learning opportunity rather than as a threat to his or her self-confidence or an undermining of his or her authority as a fledgling teacher. Contrary to the norm of noninterference, the mentor’s presence during the action of the novice’s teaching can be an asset to be tapped when either the mentor or the novice recognize an opportunity to help the novice learn in the immediate context of teaching. This kind of mentoring has a fluid, dynamic quality as mentors respond to cues from their novice making on-the-spot decisions based on their judgment of the situation at hand and their knowledge of their novice as a learner.

Outside the Action

Central tasks of teaching, such as planning and reflection, occur before or after interactive teaching. Outside-the-action forms of mentoring are contexts for learning these pre- and postactive teaching tasks (Jackson 1990). For instance, coplanning helps novices see and learn ways of thinking involved in planning for teaching and learning. Likewise, mentor sessions provide opportunities to connect close-to-classroom discussion to broader themes in education and principles of teaching practice, linking practice to theory. Debriefing sessions offer novices opportunities to develop habits of reflection and

The Professional Practice of Mentoring

self-assessment that are important tasks of professional practice (Schon 1987; Tomlinson 1995).

Looking at the array of forms of mentoring outside the action, the research team noted the highly active nature that characterized the work. All the mentors highlighted the talk that they did with their novices during pre- and postteaching times. Although the talk varied in content, timing, length, location, and tone, talking was a vital element in helping novices learn to teach. Through their talk, good mentors made their tacit knowledge explicit and alive for novices as they moved through their day. They invited novices to participate with them in planning and preparing for teaching and learning and in the afterthoughts consequent to teaching. They responded to novices' phone calls and in some instances talked for more than an hour, thinking through lesson plans or considering a classroom situation.

Forms of mentoring occur during pre-, post-, and interactive tasks of teaching. Participation in authentic tasks of teaching with the guidance, coaching, modeling, and reflective feedback that good mentors provide (Schon 1987; Tharp and Gallimore 1988) offers rich opportunities for novices' learning both inside and outside the action. With intention and purpose, good mentors thoughtfully shape opportunities to learn that help novices develop their practice as teachers.

Considering Other Contextual Distinctions

Table 1 presents one contextual distinction, inside or outside the action. What about other contextual distinctions such as preservice and induction-year novice teaching, elementary and secondary, or country differences? The research team did note differences in mentoring practices in these contexts, but it also found that the most effective mentoring observed transcended contextual differences, sometimes challenging prevailing norms or cultural constraints.

Mentors of preservice novices tended to do more mentoring inside the action of teaching than mentors of induction-year novices. This may be due to preservice novices and mentors being together in the mentor's classroom, where the mentor knows the pupils and has the ultimate responsibility for their welfare. Since they are continually present and have a well-established role in the classroom, mentors of preservice novices feel that it is easier co-teaching, coaching, and stepping into a novice's lessons.

Mentors of induction-year novices are visitors in the novice's classroom, which has implications for defining how mentors work. They are in the classroom only intermittently. They do not know the pupils as well as the novice does, and they are not the teacher ultimately responsible for the pupils' welfare. It seems less natural for them to intervene while the novice is teaching. In

this situation, norms can act as barriers to good mentoring practice. The prevalence for mentors of induction-year teachers to work only outside the action of teaching does not need to be the rule. Sharon Feiman-Nemser (2001) gives us a picture of a mentor, Pete Frazer, who intentionally and purposefully intervened in his induction-year novice's classroom. Feiman-Nemser vividly portrays this mentor working with his novice both inside and outside the action as they prepare and then teach a mathematics lesson together. As they discussed the lesson prior to teaching, Frazer offered his thinking to the novice about how to teach the mathematics concept that was the focus of the lesson. Then they taught the lesson in parallel. The mentor worked with some of the students in the novice's class, while the novice worked with the others. Afterward, they talked about what had happened in each group. This case highlights the possibilities for mentors of beginning teachers to mentor inside as well as outside the action.

Looking at elementary and secondary contexts, the research team also saw that effective mentors in both contexts used the context to support their mentoring practices. For instance, a U.S. secondary teacher used the hourly changes in classes characteristic of U.S. high schools to advantage in helping her novice learn to teach. Like the modeling, coaching, and fading paradigm presented by Collins et al. (1989), she scaffolded her novice's learning in the many different teaching tasks that were important for a beginner to learn. First, she modeled planning and teaching a subject matter unit for her first-hour class. Then she helped her novice plan and teach similar subject matter to a different class. When the novice was ready, the novice planned and taught autonomously. Each time a new subject matter unit was initiated or a teaching task was encountered for the first time, the mentor took her novice through the scaffolding sequence. Her novice learned to teach high school science by ascending a spiral-like process of observation, coparticipation, and independent enactment. The mentor envisioned her mentoring practice holistically. She knew that by taking her novice through this process repeatedly, the novice was more likely to internalize the habits of mind that teachers need to design and implement good teaching. At the same time, she provided a learning experience that paralleled the teaching and learning processes she used in her classroom with her students. In her science teaching, this mentor scaffolded her students' learning as she helped them build and explore concepts. By engaging her novice in the same learning process, the novice could get insight into teaching for conceptual understanding from the learner's perspective.

A major country difference centered on curriculum that was nationally mandated, as in China and England, and curriculum that left more to the teacher's design, as in the United States. At first the research team assumed that mentors who had mandated curriculums would not work with novices regarding curriculum issues because there seemed to be little latitude for a

The Professional Practice of Mentoring

teacher's decisions. The work of a Chinese mentor, however, showed the research team that curriculum considerations, such as how to move children's thinking from concrete to abstract understanding, were an important focus of her mentoring. This mentor used the standardized curriculum as an opportunity to look more closely at how teachers can interpret and transform it into representations that lead to conceptual understanding. The Chinese mentor worked within a seemingly limited and predetermined curriculum context in ways that opened it up to expose the need for novices to learn how to make sophisticated curriculum decisions. In contrast, in the United States, where the curriculum is more diverse and controlled by teacher decisions, it might be expected that mentors would concentrate on teaching novices how to design and shape curriculum. Only a few U.S. mentors, however, actually demonstrated their planning process and thinking or engaged their novices in coplanning. The U.S. novices frequently had to confront this complex teaching task with minimal direct guidance or insight into an experienced teacher's thinking. Effective mentors, then, "pushed the edges of their mentoring envelope" rather than let it constrain their mentoring practices.

Mentoring as a Professional Practice

In trying to characterize the practice of mentoring, I have focused on the multiple forms that this practice takes. Mentoring as a professional practice, however, means that mentoring is an educational intervention. What makes these forms educative, then? It is not just a matter of applying mentoring as technical skills. Forms of mentoring are used to support the purpose of mentoring—to promote novices' learning. Good mentors link forms of mentoring to the immediate needs of the novice as well as to a broader end they have in view—helping the novice learn to teach.

Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005, 695) point out that "mentors need a flexible repertoire to help new teachers get inside the practical and intellectual demands of teaching." Most of the mentors presented above clearly demonstrated that mentoring involved more than having a "bag of forms" to draw from or even a well-structured process to cycle through each and every time they worked with their novices. More than these, most of the mentors showed that their work involved principled actions based on their professional assessment of the immediate situation and their knowledge of their learner from past work together. It meant that mentors composed their work drawing on different skills of mentoring within a mentoring event. Over time mentors also used several different forms of mentoring to shape their practice. Their decisions on how to help their novice from one time to the next was based on

the situation at hand, the mentor's knowledge of her novice and of learning to teach, their history as mentor and novice together, and the end in view.

Dewey's (1938) notion of educative experiences helps to conceptualize mentoring as an educative practice. According to Dewey, educative experiences are characterized by *continuity* and *interaction*. The principle of continuity means that each new experience draws upon and is affected by previous experiences, which, in turn, affect the quality of future ones. The principle of interaction means that what learners bring themselves to a situation—their beliefs, understandings, desires, and needs (“internal conditions”)—connects with ideas, materials, and people in the environment (“objective conditions”) to foster an experience that leads toward growth. Dewey stressed that, in order to shape situations that promote educative experiences, teachers must know their learners and the subject matter and have learning goals in mind. In the case of mentored learning to teach, the novice is the learner whom the mentor must get to know, the subject matter is teaching, and the goal is helping the novice learn to teach. Educative mentoring means that mentors use their knowledge of each of these in making judgments about how best to guide and support the novice's learning to teach.

Knowing the Novice as a Learner

The mentors in this study stressed the importance of knowing their novices as learners and adapting their practices to complement where the novice was in his or her learning. Bringing together knowledge of the novice as a learner and knowledge of learning to teach is an important component of educative practice. A mentor who worked with several beginning teachers highlighted the importance of adapting mentoring practices to the novice's own learning needs when she talked about the difference in her work with her novices.

You take the people you work with at the level where they are, and that's what you work with. [Some] are just so well prepared. They are so self-confident, and others are not confident. They don't know what they're doing. Of the [novices] I'm working with right now, I have one who is so high I don't feel he needs a whole lot of guidance in teaching. He's very serious about what he does. He's very reflective. He is as good as some teachers that have been teaching for ten years. Okay, that's where he is. I have another novice who is barely holding on by her fingernails. She's really at a loss on how to do some of these things. And I saw, after working with her for a little while, that she was not ready for me to say, “Why don't you try cooperative learning, grouping kids, different activities?” She can't even hear that right now. . . . That's a part of the knack of being a mentor—figuring out where they are.

The Professional Practice of Mentoring

Working with a novice who is “barely holding on by her fingernails” requires a different kind of mentoring than working with a novice who “is as good as some teachers who have been teaching for ten years.” This mentor did a lot of talking in mentoring sessions, but the substance of her talk varied depending on her novice. With the more advanced novice, she talked more about broad educational issues that extend beyond the classroom. With the less advanced novice, she talked about teaching strategies that the novice could handle because that was what she could “hear.” This mentor, then, modified her mentoring practices in response to the level of her learners.

Educative mentoring, like other client-centered practices such as teaching or psychiatry, requires practitioners to get to know their clients in ways that provide insight into how to help them (Schon 1987). The mentor cited above, who recognized that one of her novices was at a place in his learning where he could consider more complex issues while another of her novices was working at learning to accomplish the more basic components of teaching, embodied the stance that good mentoring is dependent upon knowledge of where the learner is and upon comprehension of the possibilities of where the learner might move next. She believed that “that’s the role of a [mentor]. You take the people you work with at the level where they are and that’s what you work with.” Other mentors commented similarly, noting differences in novices’ levels of understanding and what that means in terms of adapting mentoring practices to touch the novice and help each move forward.

Bifocal Vision

Mentors in this study were concerned about not just what they did in the short term with their novices but also about the sustained quality of their work over time. For these mentors, educative mentoring was deliberate, purposeful though often spontaneous, improvisational actions aimed at goals that the mentors had clearly in mind. Educative mentoring was also conversations over time directed at providing novices with opportunities to develop perspectives, beliefs, and knowledge about teaching and learning. Good mentoring requires attending to the here and now while at the same time keeping an eye on the direction the learning is going. The most powerful mentoring the research team saw had this quality of “bifocal vision”—the mentors could be in the moment and still have their end goals in mind (Norman and Feiman-Nemser 2005). A good example of this bifocal vision is the Chinese mentor noted earlier who worked a teaching demonstration into her mentoring session with her novice, helping her novice analyze the immediate lesson at the same time as she was moving her novice toward focusing more on students’ understanding in the long run.

Educative mentoring goes beyond role definitions and supportive relationships. It is not simply holding novices' hands while they attempt teaching strategies that they have heard about in their course work. The process of educative mentoring develops a culture in which the participants can admit vulnerability and not knowing and be receptive to learning from the opportunities created by more knowledgeable others (Vygotsky 1978). It allows for playing with ideas, testing hypotheses, and constructing language for sustained conversations about learning to teach. Within this culture, good mentors take advantage of the time that they have with their novices, whether inside or outside the action, to help them build a firm intellectual and experiential knowledge base from which they can continue to learn throughout their careers.

Framework Application

The framework presented in this article has several potential applications. One application is that it communicates the difference between effective mentoring and effective teaching. Although teaching and mentoring have many similarities, all good teachers do not make good mentors. Conceptualizing mentoring as educative practice that occurs in a variety of contexts helps us to understand the individualized nature of this type of teaching. We also better understand the kinds of skills that mentors need, such as providing opportunities to learn through joint work on authentic tasks of teaching, that differentiate mentoring from classroom teaching as professional practices.

The framework could be a basis for an assessment of mentoring practice, both by mentors examining their own work and by others who assess mentoring practice. The framework raises such questions as these: How well does a particular mentoring skill need to be implemented in order to be effective? In what ways could mentoring be done better? What are typical difficulties in doing a particular form of mentoring? Should there be standards of good mentoring practice?

Another application of the framework is as a tool for professional development work with mentors, either beginning or experienced. How can new mentors learn the skills presented? How can experienced mentors be helped to improve? The framework helps mentors understand the complexity of the work and the skills it takes to do it well. Mentors can gain a sense of what is involved at a conceptual level as well as note the details or fine points of the practice. The framework could be used as a basis for developing published cases of mentoring practice that could be used as professional development materials for new and experienced mentors (see, e.g., Odell and Huling 2000).

The Professional Practice of Mentoring

As a basis for research, the framework could help address such questions as how mentoring differs by subject matter, by grade levels, or by context.

Conclusion

Viewing mentoring as a professional practice implies that we must understand mentoring as a serious, developing endeavor. Educative mentoring offers possibilities for both mentors and novices to work together to learn teaching as they each grow professionally at their respective levels of practice. As participants in a professional practice, mentors must have opportunities to form conversational communities in which best practice is debated and studied. The mentors in this study consistently demonstrated that thoughtful mentors draw upon their knowledge of teaching, learning to teach, and where their novice is as a learner of teaching to craft learning opportunities for their novices. These opportunities lie within multiple contexts that challenge mentors to think broadly and creatively when shaping educative experiences for their novices.

Thinking of mentoring as an educative practice offers the opportunity to consider the nature of mentoring with concepts and language that could be used in professional conversations. Educative mentoring is a dynamic, not static, practice that relies on strategic knowledge and judgment. It is complex, with ambiguities and uncertainties that characterize professional practices. Further research that looks closely at mentoring practices from mentors' and novices' own perspectives can build on the growing knowledge base about mentored learning to teach (see, e.g., Roth and Tobin 2002). Continuing to construct a language and conceptual framework that mentors, novices, teacher educators, and researchers can use to talk about mentoring practices will support the growth of professional communities concerned with studying and learning about mentoring as a professional practice.

Mentors who embrace educative mentoring learn to mentor by developing a practice that draws from a repertoire of forms of the work. This study shows that mentors who thoughtfully and purposefully structure opportunities for their novices' learning bring their novices further along in their learning than do mentor teachers who view their role as simply providing advice, emotional support, and technical pointers or just opening their classrooms for novices to perform teaching strategies. Novices can develop educative habits of mind regarding teaching and learning when they have opportunities to participate in professional conversations in the company of mentors who consciously work at articulating their own thinking, beliefs, and perspectives about good teaching and learning. Both novices and mentors gain deeper insight into their own teaching when mentors and novices together plan, teach, and reflect both in

the action and on the action of teaching (Schon 1987) rather than tackling the tasks of teaching in isolation.

Recognizing mentoring as a professional practice will gain more credibility as practitioners and researchers engage in serious study and conversations together. The most effective mentors in this study were clear that they were engaged in a professional practice that was directed toward novices' learning. They saw novices as learners, they saw themselves as teachers, and they saw teaching as the subject matter. Their goal was to help novices learn to teach. Their bifocal vision helped them to use forms of mentoring to shape immediate learning opportunities while they were keeping sight of the longer-term goal. Good teachers do not automatically become good mentors. Conceptualizing mentoring as professional practice that requires knowing your learner and the subject matter and how to connect them through educative experiences means that mentoring practice must be learned.

Notes

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1. For a review of literature on mentoring that does or does not support novices' learning to teach, see Wang and Odell (2002).

2. See Wang and Odell (2007) for an examination and analysis of the role relationship plays in several countries in supporting mentoring aimed at helping novices learn reform-minded practice.

3. The Learning from Mentors study was sponsored by the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning at Michigan State University. The views expressed in this article do not represent those of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

4. All names are pseudonyms.

5. See Wang et al. (2004) on the differences between content in mentor-novice conference sessions of Chinese and U.S. mentor-novice pairs and how the broader curriculum and teaching contexts in which the mentor-novice pairs are situated affect their conversations.

6. Boreen and Niday (2000) present a study of using writing in the form of e-mails between mentors and novice teachers that showed the promising effects of this form of mentoring on novice teachers' learning as well as on helping them to combat their sense of isolation.

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