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"BREAKING GOOD": MENTORING FOR TEACHER INDUCTION AT THE WORKPLACE

"Salir bien parados": La Mentoria para la Induccion Profesional de los Docentes Noveles

Lily Orland Barak
The University of Haifa, Israel
E-mail: lilyb@edu.haifa.ac.il
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5474-4334

Abstract:

Given the dissonant and complex character of induction for novices at the workplace, I propose a conception of mentoring that focuses on mitigating misalignments between novices' developmental stage and the socializing characteristics and pressures of workplace induction. Drawing on extant research and conceptualization, including my own research on mentoring for teacher induction, this article addresses three interrelated questions: What are the central tasks of mentors in promoting effective induction of novice teachers at the workplace? What do mentors need to know to perform these tasks? What kind of professional frameworks for learning to mentor?

I claim that in order to help novices 'break good from experience', as the title metaphorically suggests, mentors need to be prepared to flexibly adapt strategies from diverse mentoring models according to the particular socio-cultural features of induction of novices' workplace and to aspects of subject matter teaching. Such kind of mentoring is, thus, attentive to discursive tensions between ideologies, rituals, values, belief systems and behaviors that surge amongst the various players involved. The article

describes the central tasks for mentors of novice teachers, the knowledge base required of mentors in order to perform these tasks and the kind of professional frameworks for learning to mentor.

Key Words: induction; in-service education; mentor; teacher education; workplace learning

Resumen

Dado el carácter complejo que tienen los procesos de inducción profesional de los docentes noveles, el presente artículo se propone exponer una concepción de la mentoría que debe centrarse en mitigar los desajustes entre la etapa de desarrollo de los docentes noveles y las características y presiones socializadoras de este periodo de inducción. Basándose en la investigación y la conceptualización existentes este artículo aborda tres preguntas interrelacionadas: ¿Cuáles son las tareas centrales de los mentores para promover una inducción eficaz de los profesores noveles en el lugar de trabajo? ¿Qué necesitan saber los mentores para realizar estas tareas? ¿Qué tipo de marcos profesionales para aprender a ser mentor?

Se afirma que para ayudar a los docentes noveles a "salir bien parados de la experiencia", como sugiere metafóricamente el título, los mentores deben estar preparados para adaptar con flexibilidad las estrategias de diversos modelos de tutoría según las características socioculturales particulares de la inducción en el lugar de trabajo de los docentes que comienzan y los aspectos de la enseñanza de la materia. Este tipo de tutoría está, por tanto, atenta a las tensiones discursivas entre ideologías, rituales, valores, sistemas de creencias y comportamientos que surgen entre los diversos actores implicados. El artículo describe las tareas centrales de los mentores de profesores noveles, la base de conocimientos que se requiere de los mentores para realizar estas tareas y el tipo de marcos profesionales para aprender a ser mentor.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje en el lugar de trabajo; formación continua; formación del profesorado; inducción; mentor

0. Breaking from experience during induction

Consider the above excerpts selected from stories in a published booklet of stories written by novice teachers during their internship year (Orland-Barak et al., 2011b):

…already during the first week I came to learn new meanings to the word classroom management …which I also take back home every day… The way I stand in front of the class is different now from how I used to stand in front of the class when I was a student at the college… it's different, now it's real and I have an enormous responsibility of a completely different kind…

"I never thought it would be so difficult to be a novice …what was I supposed to do?"

"I wanted to feel proud… but expectations and reality were two different things"

"I was compelled by the parents to rewrite the test I had given to the pupils, something I didn't want to do…the parents kept saying that the test I had given was unfair…and the pupils also put so much pressure on me" (Orland-Barak et al., 2011b, pp. 441-442)

I have chosen to begin with the above excerpts because they vividly convey recurrent (and almost existential) feelings of novice teachers (i.e. teachers in the first year of teaching at school) 'breaking bad' from experience in their first years of teaching. Taken together, the quotes condense major shared areas of concern that characterize their induction process as they learn to 'break from experience' (Buchmann, 1990) in terms of their daily judgments, decisions and pedagogical practices: Realizing the limitation of their capacity, coping with the realization that vision is incompatible with reality, struggling with multiple accountabilities; adjusting to the personal, pedagogical and organizational factors of their teaching context; reorganizing, and reconstructing and validating their self-images (Kelchtermans, 1993, 1994). These concerns, which touch upon novices' acting, feeling, and thinking in the real 'here and now' teaching act, underscore the validated assertion that the bulk of professionalization and socialization in teacher education occurs not in the shielded artificial context of pre-service education but rather on the job (Horn & Little, 2010). Thus, in many countries the first years of teaching are known to have a crucial impact on novice teachers' professional identity and knowledge development, as well as on their decision to eventually stay or quit the profession (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Redding & Henry, 2019; McDonald, 2018; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Teachers' socialization and professional learning in the first years of teaching is, thus, assumed to be essential to their effectiveness, retention and growth, especially given that research reports that 40% to 50% of beginning teachers leave the profession by their fifth year of teaching (although to the exclusion of Spain). As they become socialized both into the school culture and norms (Zeichner, 2012) and into their respective professional teaching communities, novices experience the socializing pressures in their early professional development (Kelchtermans, 2019) due to the fact that schools generally contain multiple ideologies and social groups. The task of the new teacher, thus, becomes one of finding her/his way amongst groups of teachers to seek support and to manage complex interactions between their own values, beliefs and practices and those of the school (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Kelchtermans & Vanassche, 2017; Jokikokko, Uitto, Deketelaere, & Estola, 2017; Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018). These challenges point to the importance of assisting novices to develop negotiation and 'political skills' in order to articulate and often defend their own practice, often within powerful ideological contexts (Fidan & Koç, 2020; März, Kelchtermans & Dumay, 2016) Studies also point to the strong effect of the school environment on novices' understanding of effective teaching (Ng, Nicholas & Williams, 2010; Toropova, Myrberg & Johansson, 2021; Zavelevsky & Lishchinsky, 2020). The 'long and winding road' of teachers' socialization and learning at the early career stages, leads them to search for learning opportunities from their environment in a variety of ways, utilizing different individual strategies, relying on colleagues with various degrees of expertise, mentors, supervisors, and different resources and information sources (Orland-Barak et al., 2016). At this background, the importance of formally sustaining the first years of teaching as a unique learning phase for teachers has gained significant acknowledgement throughout the years, as more countries have initiated induction programs (Long et al., 2012).

In the context of in-service teacher education in Israel, for example, the Ministry of Education has designated the first three years of teaching as the period of induction and supported learning for new teachers. Upon termination of their studies, all new teachers must undergo a one-year internship (referred to as induction), as a requisite for obtaining a teacher certificate from the Ministry of Education and Culture. During this period, first year teachers must work at least 1/3 of a position at school, while participating in a weekly mentor-led workshop at one of the teacher education institutions. This period is accompanied by mentoring systems and professional development institutes for new teachers. The national induction program is based on workplace collegial learning, mentoring and assessment (Israeli Ministry of Education, 1999). This investment of vast resources in supporting new teachers' in-service learning underscores its significance and puts the spotlight on the need to understand and prepare mentors for their roles during induction. With this focus in mind and based mainly on a synthesis of my own research and conceptualization of mentoring for teacher induction, I address the following three interrelated questions:

(1) What are the central tasks of mentors in promoting effective induction of novice teachers at the workplace?

(2) What do mentors need to know in order to perform these tasks?

(3) What kind of professional frameworks for learning to mentor are needed in light of (1) and (2)?

1. What are the Central Tasks of Mentors for Promoting Effective Induction of Novice Teachers at the Workplace?

This question touches upon three domains: Novice teachers' professional development, induction at the workplace and mentoring for teacher learning in practice. Examining their interrelations can help us to crystallize the particularities of mentors' roles and functions, as called for by the unique challenges of mentoring teachers at their novice stage of development and by the features of induction within a particular workplace setting. Such examination can inform, in turn, on the central tasks of teacher educators and educational policy makers for facilitating effective mentoring programs in in-service teacher education. They can also direct the central tasks of educational researchers to create research agendas that would investigate the processes and outcomes of such programs. To begin addressing the question, let us first briefly consolidate some core ideas about mentoring as evidenced in the teacher education research scholarship.

1.1 'You've Got a Friend": Mentoring and Mentored Learning in Teacher Education

As studies suggest, the long and winding road of induction is best traversed when

accompanied by the right [mentor] friend, as the song goes. As critical friends, mentors are bestowed with the role of supporting the professional development of beginning. They also play a key role in the above discussed socialization processes of novices, assisting them to adapt to the norms, standards and expectations of teaching and the schools' teachers (e.g. Hobson et al., 2009; Murray & Male, 2005; Clarke & Mena, 2020) through the right balance of challenge and support. Mentors' facilitative (and in some contexts also supervisory) roles and functions are defined differently according to the mentoring approach espoused by the particular mentoring program, e.g. strategic, personal growth, situated or critical (Orland-Barak et al., 2020). These different approaches range from technical, strategic, approaches to mentoring (rooted in the early 80's) to more recent dialogical, socio-cultural, discursive views of mediation in mentoring and mentored learning (Orland-Barak, 2014). The latter approaches emphasize contextual aspects of mentoring relationships related to cultural, ideological and identity aspects (Zeichner, 2020).

According to the approach, the focus of assistance might range from granting emotional support and sustaining relationships, to providing cognitive challenge, feedback and scaffolding, mediating between different stakeholders, sometimes supervising and assessing teacher performance [or all] (Orland-Barak et al., 2020). Yet, whether strategic-apprenticeship, personal growth, situated or critical, mentoring is first and foremost described as a relational practice (Edwards, 2017) which can operate through dyadic / triadic or communal collaborative frameworks. The relational aspect foregrounds the importance of building trust, of providing critical and pragmatic feedback, and of developing sensitivity to know when to interfere and when to sit back (Williams & Soares, 2002). Relational aspects of mentoring also attend to how mentors position themselves in their own schools, in mentoring dyads and in collaborative partnerships (Bullough et al., 2008; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2014). The relational focus of mentoring is particularly relevant for sensitively attending to the emergent tensions and contradictions that novices grapple with during induction. What are these tensions? This is the focus of the next section.

1.2. When Novice Meets Workplace: Dissonant Encounters

To address the above question, let us consider what characterizes novices' professional learning and expertise development and how these characteristics might mis/align with those of the workplace. For one, we know a lot about the distinctive features of novices' learning at the workplace: Rigid reasoning, single perspectives to problems, concrete thinking and being often misled by ambiguity, being blocked when experiencing dissonance and when encountering new and unfamiliar situations, a strong focus on themselves and on their own performance and acting upon the need to succeed in fulfilling expectations by outside authorities. The progression from novice to expert is, thus, described as a gradual process whereby novice professionals learn to reinterpret and reorganize their understandings of practice as they encounter new and unfamiliar

situations (Berliner, 2001). Such a process is triggered by the pedagogical interventions and collaborative teacher learning frameworks (such as professional learning communities that teachers undergo in the course of their career and by critical incidents and critical persons (such as mentors) that challenge professionals to rethink, reinterpret and reorganize ingrained conceptions of their practice (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994). It is also vastly agreed that although there is a certain progressive continuum of stages from novice to expert, teachers move backward and forward between phases during their working lives, due to different personal, contextual and social factors such as taking on a new role, changing schools, or teaching a new group age or a new syllabus. These changes inevitably result in development disruption, at least temporarily (Day, 1999; Zeichner, 2012). We also know that pre-service and initial teaching appear to constitute a continuous developmental stage during which novices acquire knowledge of pupils, use that knowledge to modify and reconstruct their personal images of self as teacher, and develop standard procedural routines that integrate classroom management, pedagogy and subject matter instruction (Hashweh, 2013; Wilson, 2013). Early study by Kagan (1992) points to a number of relatively cohesive findings about novices which are reinforced by later research: For one, we learn about the central role that pre-existing beliefs and prior experiences play in filtering the content of teacher learning (Gay, 2010a) and the crucial influence that novice teachers' personal beliefs and images of good teachers, of self as teacher, and memories of themselves as teachers have on their construals of teaching and learning (Davin, Chavoshan & Donato, 2018; Farrell & Stanclik, 2021; Grierson, 2010).

The above features of novices' reasoning and acting as rigid, homogeneous, authority-oriented and concrete are, to a large extent, dissonant with the multidimensional, complex, distributed and dynamic character of workplace teaching. For example, consider some of the things that professionals at the workplace need to be able to do: They need to integrate multiple skills, manage simultaneous and contextual thinking in action, function in multiple settings, constantly connect between settings, persons and actions, think through cases while being sensitive to the particularities of the specific case at hand, identify and establish a professional space, assume norms of professional and collegial conduct and work in collaborative professional teams (Hager, Lee & Reich, 2012). Workplace learning is also to a large degree informal, unplanned, implicit, contextualized and collaborative (Tynjälä, 2008; Jurasite & Harbison, 2010). Most of the above functions appear to be in an almost 'living contradiction' with the kind of reasoning and performance that is characteristic of novices, as illustrated in Figure One below:
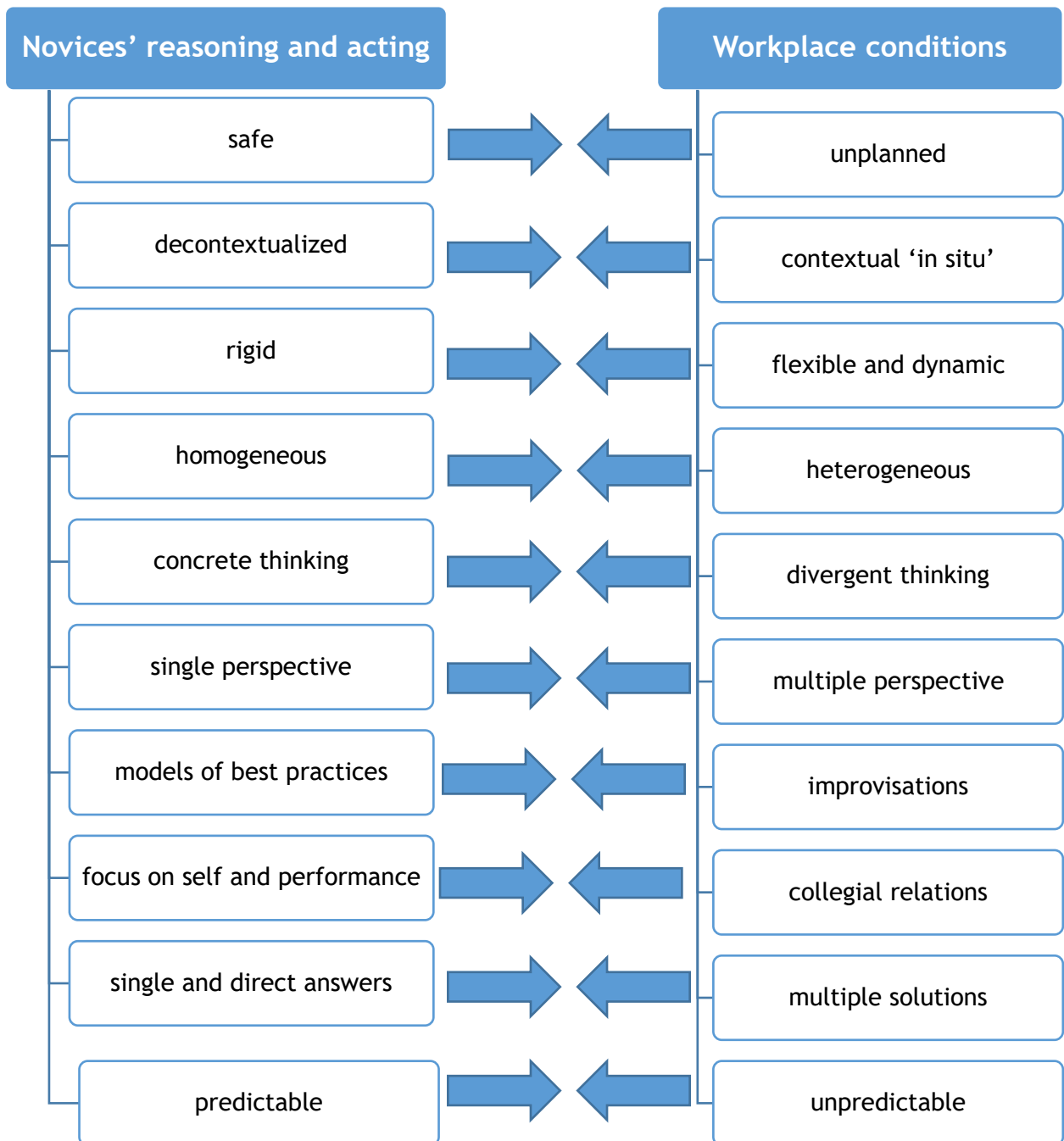
Novices' reasoning and acting	Workplace conditions
safe	unplanned
decontextualized	contextual 'in situ'
rigid	flexible and dynamic
homogeneous	heterogeneous
concrete thinking	divergent thinking
single perspective	multiple perspective
models of best practices	improvisations
focus on self and performance	collegial relations
single and direct answers	multiple solutions
predictable	unpredictable

Figure 1. Misalignments between the state of being a novice and the nature of the workplace.

Thus, for us, teacher educators and educational researchers, these inherent misalignments constitute unique challenges for understanding and supporting novices' successful induction. Let us now consider a recent study that illustrates some of the above challenges and tensions that novices experience during induction as related to the socio-cultural features of school contexts in the Arab society in Israel.

1.3. Novices Breaking from Experience in Minority Contexts

The multiple case study explored the interplay between contextual factors of Arab school settings and novice teacher learning processes, resources and strategies (Nassrealdin, Goldberg & Orland-Barak, in press). Findings point to complex relations between cultural and social characteristics of the Arab society in Israel and novices' learning within the workplace. We found, for example, that novices' concerns were intensified by what we referred to as "background noises" in the school contexts that can be associated with cultural norms and social characteristics of the Arab community as an ethnic minority in Israel. Our data revealed that novices in Arab schools manage with similar concerns to those reported in studies of novices but in a more intensified manner (issues of classroom management, relationships with colleagues, superiors, students and parents, teaching methods and catering for students' needs (Arviv-Alyashiv & Tsimrman, 2013). The intensity of these concerns seems to be rooted in cultural norms of the society which are often transferred to the structures of school settings such as hierarchical roles, status, reputation, respect and authority. For example, in their accounts of learning, novices expressed intensified concerns with having to prove themselves to other colleagues, which can be interpreted as being rooted in the sociocultural features of Arab schools where teachers' reputation plays a key role in their status in the broader community (Abu Saad, 2003). Novices often voiced an almost existential and urgent need for socialization and belonging into the school-teachers' communities, which were often described as "closed groups" that were hard to break into. This was a surprising finding since a major feature of the Arab society is collectivism, so we expected to find evidence of a strong culture of belonging (Ilyian, Zidan & Toren, 2005). Rather, novices often described the entrance into the schoolteachers' community as a hardship that operated as an obstacle which eventually hindered their learning to teach. To this end, our participants frequently reported perceiving colleagues as judgmental and were cautious about sharing and consulting with them. Thus, most novices described their induction as a solitary process, and they report seeking advice informally from colleagues whom they professionally or personally trusted, not necessarily from the same school such as seeking advice among family members or friends who teach in other institutions. In the Arab community in Israel, knowing other experienced teachers among family and friends' circles is common due to the fact that teaching is considered a common job for women also due to limitations in the labor market (Arar & Abu-Asbah, 2010). In addition, the Arab familial close lifestyle increases the availability of teachers within closer social circle outside the workplace. Novices can, then, seek advice on an almost daily basis within the family or friend circles, as safer spaces for consulting without being judged. Another intensified concern related to the expectation of new teachers to teach in novel ways, some of which they had never experienced as students. This is especially challenging for novices who were educated in the Arab conservative educational system through traditional teaching methods. Novices report that they had to go through a period of unlearning and relearning in order to meet expectations and exhibit innovative teaching methods in their schools to

in order to keep their positions. Toren & Iliyan (2008) described a similar conflict of novice Arab teachers who were expected to function as agents of change, but lacked experience and faced resistance to change by the school system and the pupils. To cope with these challenges and impasses, novices in our study report to have broken with what they perceived as a solitary experience of induction and compensated for the absence of collegial support by seeking active support for useful learning resources outside the workplace. These findings have led us to the conclusion that it is important to develop forms of mentoring assistance that can allow novices to recognize their own learning strategies and how these can promote their own learning and socialization when the contextual features of the workplace cannot fully sustain their process of induction. Our findings also raise questions about standardized induction programs for contexts such as the present study, where most of our participants feel that formal mentored learning spaces at school do not manage to provide safe spaces for sharing experience given the hierarchical distribution of roles and norms of interaction that characterize the teaching workplace context. Specifically, it seems that the implementation of an imposed mentoring induction policy (based on the mainstream education) in minority-settings with different cultural and social features is problematic (Arar & Oplatka, 2011). We suggest that policy makers take into account cultural aspects of different communities, especially the marginalized ones, and examine the compatibility of policies with different contexts. As for learning resources and strategies, our study suggests that novices ought to be encouraged to identify their entering perceptions towards the schools they are inducted into, as we found that novices' perceptions of colleagues and school culture constitute a major factor in the way novices utilize workplace resources.

The dissonant character of the novice-workplace encounter, including complexities that emerge which are rooted in socio-cultural aspects of the induction process (such as the above case) raise the question of how mentoring can attend to these challenges during induction. What are, then, the central tasks for mentors during induction called for by these challenges?

1.4. Central Tasks for Mentors During Induction: Mitigating Misalignments

Given the dissonant and complex character of induction for novices at the workplace, I propose a conception of mentoring that focuses on mitigating misalignments between novices' developmental stage and the socializing characteristics and pressures of workplace induction. Such a focus implies 'joining forces between often competing approaches to mentoring' by integrating tasks from strategic, situated, critical and personal growth approaches. Specifically (1) In order to attend to misalignments between novices' concrete reasoning, search for direct answers, intolerance of ambiguity and the highly unpredictable and dynamic character of workplace teaching, strategic and situated mentoring approaches are relevant for adopting modeling roles as expert teachers while also functioning as reflective and critical co-thinkers. The following tasks that borrow from strategic and situated

approaches can help mentors to mitigate the dissonant character of the encounter between novices and the workplace setting:

- Modeling best workplace practices, with particular stress on how these connect to the work environment and demands.

- Demonstrating simultaneous thinking and acting through cases, while examining how these teaching cases differ across contexts.

- Constantly questioning models of practice and showing their practical value in the particular context of action.

- Using mentors' knowledge of teaching and personal authentic examples of good teaching to mediate learning in 'here and now' situations.

- Demonstrating management of unpredictable problems of practice and professional dilemmas at the workplace.

- Providing practical solutions alongside encouraging multiple perspectives on the same issue in a particular teaching-learning context.

- Generalizing elements that are applicable to other situations.

- Diagnosing problems and framing novices' learning.

- Providing models for thinking about different methods of teaching according to the particular teaching context.

- Guiding and giving feedback on instructional planning that is related to contextual characteristics of particular classes and particular pupils.

- Examining immediate and long term results of teaching processes based on evidences of pupils' learning for diverse classroom settings and populations.

- Encouraging novices to recognize their own learning strategies and how these can promote their own learning and socialization.

(2) In order to manage the socializing pressures of the workplace and of the particular features of the school context, personal growth approaches can assist in facilitating emergent misalignments between being a student and becoming a teacher. Mentors' supportive roles would build on novices' strengths to manage tensions between the new and unknown, by reflectively and collaboratively exploring novices' understandings of how their personal values, beliefs and practices connect with and/or diverge from the values, norms and practices of their teaching context. Central tasks for mentors would include:

- Developing a sense of self efficacy in novices as future professionals.

- Developing novices' interpersonal communication strategies to establish professional relationships at the workplace.

- Identifying tensions between individual needs and the needs of the system.

- Encouraging novices to touch upon core reflective levels of their mission and 'being' as educators.

- Bridging between mentors' educational philosophies of the school and the formal curriculum and those of novices, while assisting them to refine their goals as educators in the particular practice setting.

- Being particularly attentive to how novices react to particular unexpected incidents, given their needs and characteristics as novices.

- Attending to how novices move backward and forward between phases during induction in terms of role and skill development, as influenced by factors at the workplace such as teaching different classes, changing schools, teaching a new group age or a new syllabus.

- Developing novices' skills to 'talk like a professional' with peers and colleagues at the workplace.

- Supporting examination of the merging of personal and professional circles in one's life.

- Differentiating between self-related factors and pupils' learning factors that affect classroom interactions.

(3) Situated and critical approaches to mentoring can also help to maximize the potential of the workplace for encouraging critical dialogue of the school values, professional standards and practices that form the school ethos. Mentors can capitalize on the unique local strengths, situated needs and unanticipated opportunities of the workplace, as potential occasions for novices' learning about the particular features of the workplace. Central tasks for mentors would entail:

- Engaging novices to reason as professionals who are sensitive to the particular school culture.

- Encouraging cultural sensitivity to codes of the environment that might affect particular pedagogical actions.

- Dealing with ethical and moral dilemmas of workplace learning.

- Taking advantage of the highly dynamic features of the workplace to create opportunities for exposing experiences of dissonance brought about by constant new and unfamiliar situations.

- Reframing practical problems and moral-educational dilemmas at institution and community levels.

- Providing safe boundaries of support for novices to spur change and social activism within the broader community.

Combining approaches allows for focusing on specific areas of novice teacher learning during induction that a particular approach can best cater for: Diagnostically, personal growth tasks can help mentors map novices' strengths, challenges and areas of learning to teach that need to be improved. Deliberatively, in any one mentoring interaction, mentors can appropriate different strategies according to the areas of growth and foci of concern that need to be attended (Orland-Barak et al., 2020). Taken together, the above suggested tasks can offer a core of mentoring practices geared to assisting novices during induction. The question remains: How can mentors need to be prepared for these tasks? What do they need to know?

2. What do Mentors Need to Know in Order to Perform These Tasks?

The above tasks require preparing mentors for thinking and performing adaptively in order to flexibly function within and across different mentoring models during mentoring relationships and interactions. This calls for acquiring competencies of adaptive expertise, in terms of cognitive abilities and analogical problem solving in order to make sense of the context-specificity of knowledge and of the particular characteristics of novel situations (Carbonell et al., 2014). Adaptive expertise allows individuals to perform at a high level in the face of changing job tasks or work routines. Its gradual acquisition occurs through changes in work and/or job task requirements (e.g. Griffin and Hesketh, 2003), changes in the complexity of situations (Chen, Thomas & Wallace, 2005), changes from usual to unusual situations (Joung, Hesketh & Neal, 2006), or changes from common to exceptional situations (Neal et al., 2006) [as cited in Carbonell et al., 2014). Taken to our context of mentoring novices, this would imply adapting themselves to new tasks and strategies based on mentoring models that they might be less familiar with. This would allow for managing emergent mis/alignments and tensions between novices' needs and lacks, the features of the workplace, mentors' own tendencies to preserve familiar modes of practices, and professional demands on novices.

2.1. Generic and Subject Matter Knowledge for Mentoring Novices

As elaborated in previous sections, the workplace setting within which novices

operate is a crucial contextual factor during induction, and plays a major role in the kind of mentoring that is called for in order to assist the novice teacher. We should also mention subject matter teaching as an additional 'context' that shapes the way in which mentors assume their supportive roles. These roles, related to mentors' conceptions of subject matter teaching have also been found to play a central place in the aims and processes of mentors' work with student teachers and probably with novices as well (Becher & Orland-Barak, 2017). For example, in our study of mentoring student teachers in the Arts we found that mentoring also serves as a means for keeping standards of artistic production and creation and/or for introducing student teachers to school norms and their micro-politics. Thus, mentors also seem to employ the institutional values underlying the teaching and learning of a particular subject matter domain to mediate novices' professional learning. While in earlier work (Orland-Barak, 2010) I emphasized the generic discursive attributes of mentoring, recent study has extended this view to include the social roles that mentors attribute to subject matter and how these direct their actual mentoring practices. It follows, that while the knowledge-base for mentoring novices is known to include a solid understanding of subject matter teaching (Ball, 2000), acquaintance with educational policy and school reality (Achistein & Athanases, 2006; März & Kelchtermans, 2020), and vast knowledge about pupils' learning in the respective domains (Hudson, Spooner-Lane, Murray, 2013; la Velle, 2020; Wexler, 2020), mentors also activate certain knowledge domains that associate with the social position of subject matter in different social dimensions.

2.2. Relational Knowledge for Mentoring Novices

I return to earlier section in this paper which underscores the relational aspect of mentoring as core for mitigating mis/alignments between the different spheres of interaction that novices encounter during induction. Edwards & D'Arcy (2004) refer to this aspect as developing relational agency in mentoring i.e. the ability of the mentor to attune his/ her responses with those of the novice (or learning to 'tune in' to the novice (Orland-Barak, 2001b) in dynamic, joint activity in a particular socio-cultural context of action (Edwards, 2017), influencing the direction that professional learning can take (Langdon, 2017). Learning how to conduct mentoring conversations grounded in relational agency can encourage novices to discuss openly their personal histories and understandings of teaching, what drives their interpretations and decisions in classroom contexts and their decisions about students and curricula in relation to the wider purposes of schooling (Edwards, 2010). Relational agency in mentoring also fosters novices' learning to become agentic teachers who know how to develop tasks and forms of support based on informed interpretations of how a learner is responding to a classroom task (Edwards & Protheroe, 2003).

One might wonder, however, whether fostering this kind of agentic mentoring might clash with the pragmatic needs of being a novice (as elaborated in early section). Yet studies have also shown that contrary to the common widespread contention that in

their struggle to survive novices adopt a predominantly skeptic and predominantly technical stance towards teaching in their first years (Vosniadou et al., 2020), novices also exhibit a strong sense of hope and belief in the capacity of the teacher to make a change, which transpires (Orland-Barak et al., 2005; Parsons et al., 2017). Furthermore, relational agency in mentoring also speaks to the multicultural contexts within which novices work, which necessitate tolerance and responsiveness to the voices and cultural practices of the various ethnic and minority groups of novices' teaching context. In developing relational agency, mentors learn to understand how ideologies, rituals, values, belief systems, and behaviors play out in mentoring interactions amongst various participants coming from different cultural, ethnic religious backgrounds and educational orientations (Orland-Barak, 2010). Such knowledge of the complex interpersonal, social and cultural professional webs is of paramount importance for promoting a culturally responsive mentoring agenda (e.g. Burgess, Bishop & Lowe, 2020; Gay, 2010b; Kochan & Pascarelli, 2014; Mullen, 2000). This implies developing an affirming attitude towards novices who differ from the dominant culture, and a commitment to act as agents of change with an understanding of the cultural and political forces that shape the school contexts within which they function.

2.3. Putting it All Together: A Knowledge-Base for Mentoring During Induction

Consonant with the above knowledge-base for mentors based on adaptive expertise would include the acquisition of discursive mentoring competencies that integrate between generic, subject matter and relational aspects of the mediation, while learning to flexibly adapt different tasks from diverse mentoring models to address the socio-cultural features of induction of novices' workplace and aspects of subject matter teaching. Some of these competencies would include:

- Identifying and managing: Emergent gaps between the mentor and the novice's codes and norms of behavior and orientations to subject matter teaching; competing accountabilities at the novice's workplace and potential communication breakdowns; culturally loaded mentor-mentee interactions; novice's recurring patterns of action as directed by ingrained perceptions of teaching, learning and subject matter.

- Appropriating strategies from different mentoring approaches in specific mentoring situations and subject matter teaching domains.

- Connecting emotionally and professionally to respond to contextual and disciplinary differences that might arise in particular areas of teaching.

- Assisting in analyzing practice systematically and in articulating feelings of distress/ incompetence.

- Intervening to mitigate conflicts between different stakeholders surrounding novices' work.

- Triggering reflection on how novices' personal histories and understandings of teaching drive their interpretations and classroom decisions about students and curricula.

- Encouraging novices to become agentic teachers based on informed interpretations of how learners respond to classroom tasks.

- Recognizing novices' ways of thinking, behaving and being as influenced by their ideologies, values, belief systems as rooted in their cultural, ethnic religious backgrounds, disciplinary and educational orientations.

Our true challenge, then, lies in creating appropriate mentoring support systems (Avalos, 2011; Flores & Ferreira, 2009) for developing this knowledge base and tasks. This is the focus of the next section.

3. What Kind of Professional Frameworks for Learning to Mentor are Needed?

In general, the recognition of the need to promote professional development frameworks that prepare mentors for assisting new teachers is not new in the teacher education research literature. Almost four decades ago, Judith Warren-Little's review acknowledged the importance of mentors' role formation suggesting formalized contexts for mentor selection and preparation for the job (Little, 1990). At the sprouts of the 21st century, Achinstein & Athanases (2006) developed a conceptual framework aimed to equip mentors with a bi-level and multi-domain knowledge base which targets both at students and teachers. Other studies stress the importance of mentors' social construction of knowledge through exchange amongst teams of professionals, underscoring the potential of professional conversations for mentor knowledge development (Tillema & Orland-Barak, 2006). There has also been research on the need to extend mentors' professional learning to areas beyond their knowledge as teachers, such as becoming familiar with theories of adult learning as well as with generic principles of mentoring (Jones & Straker, 2006). Clarke, Killeavy & Moloney (2013) highlight the importance of developing mentors' political literacy to assist novices to act while being sensitive to the school political climate which might create conflicts of professional identity. Several studies that I conducted with colleagues explore frameworks for learning to mentor which focus on how mentors learn to construe their new role by articulating differences and similarities between their practice as teachers of children and as mentors of teachers (Orland-Barak, 2001a); on the regressions and progressions that play out when experienced professionals take up an additional role, such as in the passage from teaching to mentoring (Orland-Barak et al., 2005); and on action research frameworks aimed at developing mentors'

constructions of the gaps and contradictions that they identify in their mentoring practices (Orland-Barak et al., 2011a).

Formalizing frameworks for learning to mentor in the context of in-service teacher education programs carries the important message that mentoring should be recognized as a professional practice which requires a formal background of academic and professional studies as a requisite for selection. This formal process of professionalization would culminate in an official recognition of the role as part of the ladder of promotion for teachers within the educational system. As mentioned earlier, the call for professionalization was already voiced in the 90's of the past century by Warren Little in her critique regarding the importance of considering formal selection of mentors less as an event and more as a continuing process by which mentors earn their titles on the job" (Little, 1990, pp. 306). Many countries have strongly voiced the need for mentors' professionalization, and some have already begun and instantiated formal frameworks (for example Australia, Chile, England, Finland, Israel, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, the U.S. etc.). Conceptually, professional courses for preparing mentors of novices call for adopting a view of the mentor-as- reflective practitioner and researcher into his/her own practice, with a focus on critically exploring how to mitigate emergent misalignments between novices' developmental stage and the socializing characteristics and pressures of workplace induction. To this end, mentors can be invited to document their experiences through portfolios, cases, journals and stories of critical incidents in their practices with novices. These are brought to the course sessions, constituting working texts through which connections across contexts and theoretical notions are made. These frameworks of participation allow them to share their own stories of practice as teachers and as former mentees, through which they can collaboratively reflect and reframe their thinking and possible misconceptions of practice. They can also allow for collaboratively raising problems, uncertainties, questions and dilemmas that arise from the highly moral, cultural and political character of mentoring novices (Orland-Barak, 2010). The development of adaptive expertise through such frameworks could be promoted by focusing the reflective conversations around aspects such as reflection on emergent tensions, connections and contradictions between mentors' pedagogical, moral, political and ideological stances to education and teaching, those of their mentees and those of the workplace. Other focal aspects could consider examining similarities, differences and contradictions between different approaches in terms of mentors' roles and practices as related to the purpose of a particular mentoring interaction and context of novices' workplace; exposure to situations that challenge mentors' ingrained beliefs and assumptions and examining instances of dissonance between their educational agendas as teachers and as mentors of novice teachers. Mentors can also be provided with opportunities to observe different mentoring settings in order to build a repertoire of contrastive cases focusing on the interpersonal, micro-political, and professional conditions that operate in a particular workplace context (adapted from Orland-Barak, 2010).

4. Coda

Social agency is inherent in any kind of educational endeavor (Edwards, 2017). Mentors, as social agents of novices, need to recognize that mitigating between discrepancies and misalignments between novices and the workplace is influenced by how they interpret these as resources for learning rather than as problems to be overcome. Helping novices to 'break good from experience' necessitates, thus, a kind of mentor that understands the complexities of novices' induction as challenges and is capable of functioning adaptively within and across mentoring models according to the idiosyncratic features of the novice-workplace encounter. Such kind of mentoring is, thus, attentive to discursive tensions between ideologies, rituals, values, belief systems and behaviors that surge amongst the various players involved. As such, it pushes us to extend traditional matriarchal and patriarchal functions of support and guidance rooted in Homer's Mentor, towards the development of a professional role characterized by a formal period of learning, with unique competencies and skills for mediating novices' learning as it unfolds within their complex interpersonal and social professional webs of induction.

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