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15. DOES MENTOR-EDUCATION MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

INTRODUCTION

It gives me a lot to see a student teacher or a newly qualified colleague become confident. It helps to make tacit knowledge visible. Actually it leads to more reflection; not only on the newcomer's way of teaching, but also on my own.

The aim of this chapter is to focus on differences between formally educated and not educated mentors. However, as an introduction we have chosen a quote that illustrates the similarities we found rather than the differences. The core value of mentorship according to our informants in the current study seems to be two-fold. First, the satisfaction they experience when they realize that their support to the newcomer contributes to increased confidence. Second, that mentoring helps themselves to increased self-awareness and self-reflection.

The last thirty years school-based mentoring has come to play an important role in the induction period of newly qualified teachers. Considerable resources have been spent on developing induction programs and on the process of mentoring (Hobson et al., 2009). Mostly experienced teachers are asked to be mentors (Jones, 2010). Teachers are educated to facilitate pupils' and not colleagues' learning. How to guide, support and challenge equal partners is something quite different. However, teachers are educated to facilitate pupils' and not colleagues' learning, and their expertise is related to teaching in the classroom. How to guide, support and challenge equal partners is something quite different. Internationally formal academic education for mentors is an unusual enterprise (OECD, 2005). More common are short courses connected to induction programs for newly qualified teachers. Research shows that programs intended to prepare mentors for their tasks vary in nature and quality and often focus more on administrative precautions than on developing mentors' abilities to facilitate mentees' professional learning (Hobson et al., 2009). In Norway formal education for mentors has been established and offered to experienced teachers throughout the country the last few years. Almost all teacher education institutions provide formal studies in mentoring for experienced teachers (Kroksmark & Aaberg, 2007; Smith, Kruger, & Sagvåg, 2013). Norwegian authorities have developed a proposal for a framework of competence-aims for education of mentors. Learning

outcome is articulated based on the qualification framework (Knowledge Department, 2010, p. 4; KD, 2011). According to this document educated mentors should have developed proficiency in communication and mentoring. They should also gain knowledge about professional development for teachers. Their main task should be to support newly qualified teachers in their professional development, but the document also states that mentors should develop a more general competence in how to contribute to school development. Thus Norwegian authorities want to contribute to mentor education of teachers who are able to support professional development as a support to organizational development through the new profession of mentors that is emerging inside the profession.

Concerning induction in Norway little is said in political documents about the formal framework mentors meet in schools and how mentoring should be understood and practiced. Summing up, on the one hand teacher education institutions in Norway are encouraged to formally educate mentors who can guide and support, not only newly qualified teachers, but also the rest of the staff. On the other hand there is no formal induction period for newly qualified teachers in Norway. Once they have passed the examination from the teacher education institutions Norwegian teachers are certified for the rest of their lives. Schools are encouraged by the authorities to give newly qualified teachers a mentor (formally educated or not), but there is no demand of it (MER, 2008–2009).

The aim of the study is to examine how mentors with and without mentor education perceive and practice their role, and if there are any differences in the way these two groups understand their missions. The study is conducted in a county in the western part of Norway.

BACKGROUND

Why Mentoring?

According to Jones (2006a), structural, social and cultural changes make the understanding and interpretation of the concept of mentoring change over time. Mentoring is often viewed as a solution to different national goals and challenges (Wang et al., 2008).

There are different reasons and justifications for mentoring. Mentoring has occurred informally as a supportive activity between teachers for years. Relatively recently it has been recognized as a distinct, integral component of professional teacher education and development programs (Jones, 2006b). Referring to the English educational context Jones points to the fact that from the 1950's the mentor had the role of a master who applied rules and values to the mentee. Further she shows how the conceptual framework of teacher education dramatically changed in 1992 from an academic into a vocational domain (DFE, 1992). Teacher education in England is no longer planned and delivered by tutors in higher education, but through partnerships between schools and teacher education institutions. Emphasis is on

training more than education, and practicing teachers play a key role in professional development for novice teachers. Experienced teachers are no longer supposed to be just models; they are also expected to be assessors and gate-keepers for newly qualified teachers in order to fill the required standards; and are to decide if the novice teacher is qualified according to the standards for induction. Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) claim that mentoring programs should be designed to prepare mentors for becoming *change agents* for the whole school community. In what they call “the fourth professional age” they argue that:

We are on the edge of postmodern professionalism where teachers deal with diverse clientele and increasing moral uncertainty where many approaches are possible and more and more groups have an influence. (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000, p. 52)

In times when teaching is embedded in uncertainty and there are few “correct” answers, mentors should learn how to provide strong emotional support to the school community (Zemblyas, 2003; Kelchtermans, 2009). Experienced as well as novice teachers are constantly being challenged by new demands and reforms, diverse pupil population, and increased demands for accountability. Mentoring should be seen as a device to build strong professional structures in schools dedicated to improving, learning and caring.

Langdon (2007) argues that the aim and purpose of mentoring differs internationally. The fact that political *justifications* seem to go in two different directions is supported by the OECD report (OECD, 2005). The aim of the first approach is to focus on adjustment and adaption. In this approach, the novice teacher is looked upon as helpless and in need of support (Langdon, 2007). The aim is to help the novice teacher to fill the standards and adapt to the existing organization. Based on a study from 25 countries Langdon claims that politicians in these countries want to fix problems, increase recruiting and avoid retention. The main task for the mentor is to give advice to the newcomer on how to act in order to be accepted. The second approach values the newly qualified teachers’ personal abilities and possibilities as a contribution to the school as a learning community. The purpose of mentoring is to encourage newly qualified teachers in exercising self-assessment and reflection in collaboration with other teachers. Novice teachers contribute with new perspectives on learning. Consequently they are seen as resources that can challenge the existing school culture in line with the view of Hargreaves and Goodson (2000). The literature suggests that to avoid unnecessary frustration and to support and fully benefit from the new teachers’ updated knowledge, a mentored induction period for novices is recommended. Per day, Norway has no systematic induction program for novice teachers, and it is therefore useful to take a closer look at what the literature says about mentoring models during the induction phase.

Maynyard and Furlong (1993) refer to three different mentoring models; the apprentice model, the competence model, and the reflection model. In the *apprentice* perspective the mentor is looked upon as a model for the novice teacher in line

with the first, above mentioned, period in England. The *competence* model refers to standards and how the mentor can support the newly qualified teacher in reaching required goals. According to the *reflection* model the mentor is a critical friend; a person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critique of a person's work as a friend (Schuck & Russell, 2005). Mentors in England following the competence model are required not only to nurture capacity facilitating personal and professional growth, but also to assess the novice teachers' competence as future teachers. To be the gatekeeper who decides if the novice teacher should be given a license to the profession or not makes the role even more complicated.

In Norway mentoring newly qualified teachers is suggested as an important enterprise in Whitepaper 11 (MER, 2008-2009), but no formal political legislation is made. As a result, we see today that the Government's recommendation to provide newly qualified teachers with mentoring is still to a large extent dependent on the value local authorities and school leaders find in establishing mentor programs. Thus, we find that the practice of mentoring differs from county to county.

Currently two national political initiatives related to mentoring are taking place at the same time, and they do not seem to acting in full harmony with each other yet. One initiative is the governmental support to mentor education as briefly described in the beginning of the paper, and the second initiative is the governmental recommendation to provide mentoring to novice teachers during the first year of teaching. However, it is up to the school to allocate a mentor and to establish a mentored induction program. Consequently, some educated mentors who have taken formal mentor education are unable to practice mentoring because the schools and local communities where they teach do not offer any kind of mentoring.

MENTORING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NOVICE COLLEAGUES

There is a lot of research on why mentoring is important and on the effects of mentoring for newly qualified teachers (Rippon & Martin, 2006; Hobson et al., 2009; Roths et al., 2012). There is less research on how the role as a mentor should be performed and how mentors should learn to practice their role (Hobson et al., 2009). The answer to the question of how to act as a mentor is not clear. Wang and Odell (2002) argue that what mentors look upon as their main mission is to provide emotional support and technical guidance to the mentees.

In the reflection model novice teachers are looked upon as colleagues and equal partners. In Norway teachers get their everlasting certificate and license for teaching upon graduating from teacher education. As newly qualified teachers they are equal peers to their mentors. Consequently mentors may hesitate to influence the way the novice teacher performs teaching and may not see it as part of their role to help the newly qualified teacher to understand the relationship between theoretical knowledge and classroom practice. The result is that mentoring tends to help to

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stop retention, because of the support the teachers receive from their mentors, but not to change traditional teaching and learning practices (Jones, 2010), because the mentors may be reluctant to challenge these practices. In order to support learning processes mentors have to find a balance between challenge and support rather than primarily making teaching manageable for novice teachers (Ulvik & Sunde, 2013). Loughran (2006) asserts that mentors should stimulate to reflection and challenging taken-for-granted ideas by reframing and questioning underlying personal theories. Theories about teaching are often deeply rooted after many years of observation as pupils. In learning about teaching student teachers and newly qualified teachers need to question the taken for granted in their learning about teaching through metacognition. One aspect of the mentor's role is to challenge novice teachers in their self-reflection and metacognition. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) remind us that more attention in research has been paid to novice teachers' role as teachers in the classroom than to their role as new colleagues. In what the researchers call the micro-political reality teachers negotiate their positions. To understand and move in this terrain may be just as challenging as class management for novice teachers. Mentors' role as guides in the micro-political terrain is important. According to Jones (2010) the role of effective mentoring requires developing an awareness of the multi-faceted and conflicting role, understanding of adult learners' needs and workplace learning, a critical capacity in the analysis and reflection of classroom and mentoring practice, mediating skills, and emotional intelligence. The list of requirements is long and demanding. Jones (2010) further argues that in England mentors are selected on the basis of their expertise as teachers based on the assumption that they can be good role-models and evaluators. She challenges the belief that a good teacher necessarily becomes a good mentor and claims that mentor education is needed. In order to facilitate novice teachers' professional learning, mentors need to have access to relevant and focused training and development, be provided with professional and personal support and be allocated adequate resources (Jones, 2010, p. 127). Referring to a research project conducted in twelve European countries Jones claims that the majority of mentors in these countries had undergone minimal training. The literature discusses widely the complexity of mentoring by describing the many roles the mentor has, yet there seems to be little knowledge about how mentors are prepared to take on the complex responsibilities of mentoring., addressed.

EDUCATED INTO A PROFESSION?

Many countries i.e. the UK and USA have long traditions for mentoring newly qualified teachers, often linked to an induction program. More uncommon is an organized mentor education that gives a formalized competence (Hobson et al., 2009). Within the OECD-region mentor education is regarded desirable but not widespread (OECD, 2005). An important question is what should be the curriculum in mentor education? What should mentors know and why? The aims of mentor

education will differ with the aims of induction. If newly qualified teachers are supposed to learn how to adjust to the existing school culture and to fill the national standards, in line with the competence model (Maynyard & Furlong, 1993) mentors should be trained to assess colleagues' work and to assess the results. If the aim is to support and challenge (Langdon, 2007) experienced as well as newly qualified teachers the curriculum should be different. Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) claim that mentoring programs should have three main aims; first mentoring should be seen as an instrument for building strong professional cultures dedicated to improving teaching, learning and caring. Second, mentoring should aim at addressing all teachers, not just novices, and third those who are involved in mentoring programs should realize that they are contributing to recreation of the profession. Mentors should learn not just to support others but also how to transform and challenge the teaching profession (ibid.).

In order to understand more of how the teachers experienced their formal mentor education a study was conducted in the same local context as the one described in the current chapter (Helleve & Langørgen, 2012). 25 students participated in the study which was conducted by two of the teacher educators. By the end of education the students were asked how the study had influenced the way they perceived their role as mentors. Four central concepts were selected from the analysis of the data-material; increased *consciousness*, *reflection*, *awareness*, and *confidence*. The possibility to discuss their own experiences with peers seems to be the most important activity. The mentors brought their own cases into the discussion in different ways, and report two main reasons why the formal mentor study has contributed to increased consciousness, reflection, awareness, and confidence. The first was that the mentor-students have had the possibility to discuss recognizable situations from practice. The second reason was the communicative skills they have developed through the study.

In spite of the fact that every situation is unique in education the situations are recognizable. As teachers the mentor-students had experienced different ethical dilemmas with no correct answers. The possibilities for discussing these situations, highlighted by theory gave the students possibilities to see the situations from different angles. One of the students said:

Where earlier I used to react through intuition, without reflection I now ask more questions. I often ask myself why I act like I do. The consequence is not necessarily that I act differently. Rather that I am more conscious on the decisions I take.

Through formal education the mentors have adopted new perspectives on well-known situations. Distance to practice and different theoretical perspectives have contributed to increased consciousness.

Development of communicative skills is the second field the mentor-students acknowledge as an important contribution to development of increased consciousness, reflection, awareness, and confidence. One student said:

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Through this study I have reached my own goal: to be able to give theoretical reasons for my practice and to develop strategies and methods for mentoring.

The students were regularly in groups of three where they practiced as mentors for each other based on authentic cases from their own practice. They changed the roles as mentor, mentee, and observer and after the session was finished the “mentors” got feedback on their mentoring skills from the two other peers. According to the students the practical training and feedback made the students more confident on their role as mentors in authentic situations.

Another study among educated mentors shows that the Norwegian formal mentor education provided the mentors with a new knowledge base that was different from what they had gained as teachers (Ulvik & Sunde, 2013). When the teachers started their mentor education they had focus on themselves as mentors and how they should act. By the beginning of their mentor education they expressed that through development of personality and attitudes they wanted to become good mentors. During the program their focus changed from the individual perspective to focus on how to facilitate others’ development. The researchers claim that this process might be compared to the process newly qualified teachers go through. Further they maintain that mentors’ experiences and consciousness made it easier to support others’ development. Based on the fact that a new knowledge base emerges, the question is raised: Is mentoring a new profession within the profession (Smith & Ulvik, 2010).

What We Wanted to Investigate

The aim of this study described in this chapter is to examine how mentors with and without mentor education perceive and practice their role as mentors. We have focused on the following research questions: 1. How do mentors with and without formal education perceive and practice their role? 2. Are there any differences in the way the two groups understand their mission? As researchers we were interested to know if the mentors had a formal education or not, and what the educated mentors thought they had learned. We were also curious to know how the mentors understood their own role. Further we asked about their goals for mentoring. We also wanted the mentors to give descriptions of how they actually practiced their role. We wanted to find out if and why they practiced mutual class-room observations and how they organized the mentor-sessions. We were also interested to know if and eventually why they enjoyed their role as mentors.

THE APPROACH WE TOOK

The current study we describe as a pilot study which examines how mentors perceive their role as mentors, and if there is a difference between the perceptions of mentors with and without mentor education. As already mentioned previously

in this chapter, formal mentor education as practiced in Norway is a relatively new initiative nationally as well as internationally. Consequently, there is a strong need for research in order to get a deeper understanding of the value of mentor education, and specifically by examining if mentor education leads to change in how the practice of mentoring is perceived.

Context and Sample of the Study

The data was collected from a convenient sample of secondary school-teachers who were all mentoring newly qualified teachers (NQT). The participants (n=23), who were related to a network of mentors established by the university in case, voluntarily participated in the study, and they were assured of the anonymity of their responses. Their teaching experience was varied, ranging from 4- to 30+ years, whereas their experience as mentors was less (range of 1-10 years). Most of the teachers were without a formal mentor education, yet the majority reported that they had participated in short workshops of half a day or so. The teachers represented a variety of content subjects, and most of the subjects taught in secondary school were represented. Data were collected in the autumn term 2012.

Tools We Used

We chose to use an open ended questionnaire which had first been developed in English jointly by Finnish and Norwegian researchers for the purpose of a larger comparative study. This project is still in progress and therefore we do not relate to it further in this paper. The questionnaire was translated into Norwegian for the purpose of this study. In order to ensure the validity of the Norwegian version of the questionnaire, small group of mentors who did not take part in the study, agreed to read through it and respond to the questions. Only minor revision (wording) were found necessary.

The first part of the questionnaire asked for demographic data, some of which have been presented above in the description of the participants. The open ended part of the questionnaire inquired how the mentors valued the preparation and education they had taken as mentors, how they perceive their role as mentor, and the goals they have for their mentoring activities. Furthermore they were asked how they plan to achieve the goals by planning the content of the mentor meetings. We were also interested in learning about what expectations they had of the mentees, the novice teachers, based on the assumption that mentoring is a two way communication and dialogue. Therefore we pursued to inquire about how the mentors felt they personally benefitted from being a mentor (see English version in the appendix).

It turned out that the data collection was far from being a simple process, and we needed to use two different procedures to gather data. First an electronic version sent to 84 mentors, however only 12 responded. To increase the number of respondents, the same questionnaire was handed out in paper form in a workshop for mentors, and

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11 new responses were collected, making a total of n=23 respondents. This was still not a large sample, but big enough to start data analyzing which would add to our knowledge about mentor roles and practices.

How We Analysed the Data

We did not use a priori system of codes and categories for the analysis besides those which were related to the questions asked. The three authors first interpreted the qualitative statements individually. Next, each of the authors categorized the statements using a grounded theory approach. The authors compared and discussed the categories. There was a high level of reciprocal understanding. With minor adjustments, the authors arrived at the categories for the open-ended questions as presented in the findings. The first category tells who the mentors are. If they define themselves as educated or not, how long they have practiced as mentors and if they are mentoring student teachers, novice teachers or both groups. The participants were divided into two groups; formally educated and not educated mentors. The second category is concentrated on educated mentors and their experiences from mentor education. How did they perceive their education and what did they learn from it? In order to answer the research questions the next categories are divided in two columns; educated and not educated. The following categories are selected: How do the mentors perceive their role? What are their goals for mentoring? Do they practice observation in their own and their mentees' classrooms? Do they practice individual or group-mentoring? The last category was first divided into two sub-categories: Do the mentors enjoy their job as mentors or not? The next sub-categories were why or why not? If the answer was positive, the reasons were categorized into support and self-reflection. The first refers to the satisfaction it gave the mentors to see that their support was a contribution to novice teachers' growth. The answers in the second category told that the mentors themselves were stimulated to self-reflection through the mentoring process. In the following the categories are presented. Quotes are selected to illustrate the different categories.

FINDINGS

The findings address the research questions of how mentors with and without mentor education perceive and practice their role, and if there are any differences in the way these two groups understand their mission.

Who Are the Mentors?

The results show that from the total group of respondents (N = 23) as many as 17 report that they are not educated as mentors. Education in this context means courses including level 1 with 15 EJTC's or level 2 with 30.

I attended mentor education at the University and took my exams there.
Altogether 30 EJCT's

Some mentors who have announced that they either have a one-day course, a mini-course or that they have practiced as mentors are not counted in the group of those with mentor education (N=3). What it means to be an educated mentor is obviously perceived differently as illustrated by the following quote:

I once attended a course during an afternoon.

Few mentors are given time for mentoring. To a large extent mentoring newly qualified teachers is a task that comes on top of their ordinary job as teachers (N=15). Two mentors are part of the school's leader-team and mentoring novice teachers is one of the tasks they have to take because they are responsible for the welfare of a whole group of teachers. The numbers are almost the same for newly qualified teachers, but slightly different. 10 mentors claim that novice teachers in their school have protected time for mentoring while 13 take it as part of their ordinary job. In some cases it does not help if time for mentoring is said to be protected. One mentor writes that the novice teacher she is mentoring thinks that one hour every week is more than she is willing to spend because she has so much else to do.

Who Are the Mentors?

Few of the teachers who are practicing mentors have mentor education (N=6). The main essence of what the six educated mentors claim to have learned is that it is important to stimulate the novice teachers to self-reflection. They have learned why and how communicative abilities like listening and asking questions can help "the other" to find answers. These are abilities they have developed during mentor education. The mentee should not be told what to do. The point for the mentor is to find out where he or she actually is, and through a dialogic approach learn together with the novice teacher in a relationship characterized by equality. The mentors have learned that their task is not to give answers or advice but to listen to the novice teacher and support and stimulate to independence like this mentor says:

The social aspect is important, to be present and to listen. The mentee needs to talk to somebody. My job as a mentor is not to come with the solution, but to support the novice teacher's way of thinking, to ask questions and not necessarily answer all of them, but to make the other person reflect.

Another mentor says that action research was important for him and made him understand more of his own professional development:

Action research was an activity that helped me understand my own development.

Learning about oneself as a teacher and mentor was another comment. Apparently mentor education has been a personal profit for the mentor, not only as a future mentor for novice teachers but as a human being and a teacher.

HOW DO MENTORS PERCEIVE THEIR ROLE?

In the analysis of this question we chose to use two categories; support or reflect. This means that the mentor either sees it as her mission to be a model and to contribute to adaption for the newly qualified teacher or to stimulate to reflection. An example of the role as a supporter is the mentor who writes: *The essence of the role as a mentor is to support, mentor and give advice.* Another quotation is: *My role is to help newcomers into different subjects and school as an organization.* The personal aspect is important. What the mentor looks upon as his or her most important mission is to help the novice teachers to become part of the school community. The newly qualified teacher should adapt to the role as a teacher as it is understood in this specific school context and as it is required by the authorities. The second category is the mentor who sees herself as a catalyst for the mentee to become reflective. An example is: *Listen, make the other person reflect and discuss different challenges as for example assessment.*

Altogether 18 mentors answered the question of how they perceive their role as mentors. Their opinions of how they look upon themselves seem to differ a lot. Within the first category with the mentor as a supporter we find altogether 12 mentors. In the second category where the mentor perceives herself as a mediator for reflection there are 6. When we split up between educated and non-educated mentors we find the pattern shown in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. How educated and non-educated mentors perceive their role

	<i>Not educated</i>		<i>Educated</i>	
<i>Role</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Reflect</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Reflect</i>
<i>N</i>	11	1	1	5

Note: N=Number of participants

The majority of not educated mentors perceive themselves as being of support, while the majority of educated mentors want to stimulate reflection.

How Do Mentors Practice Their Role?

Our next question was what the mentors looked upon as their goals for mentoring ([Table 2](#)). 20 mentors answered the question. Based on the answers the two categories support and challenge/reflect were chosen (N=11). One quotation is selected to illustrate each of these categories:

My goal is to strengthen the novice teacher's knowledge about how school works on different levels, to give support and strengthen self-confidence. Help the newly qualified teacher to become a better leader in the class-room.

The other group wanted to challenge the novice teacher and to stimulate to reflection and independency (N=9). One mentor says:

I want to contribute to change of practice.

Another quote is:

I want to discuss authentic situations. We know well that we can teach each other something we know well and discuss challenges, like assessment for learning.

This mentor compares the outcome of mentoring to assessment for learning. The experienced as well as the newly qualified teacher learns from discussing their experiences.

Table 2. Goals for mentoring

	<i>Not educated</i>		<i>Educated</i>	
Role	Support	Reflect/challenge	Support	Reflect/challenge
N	9	5	2	4

Note: N=Number

The mentors were asked to what extent they used classroom observation as a support for mentoring (Table 3). Altogether 21 answered the questions.

Table 3. Classroom observation

	<i>Not educated</i>		<i>Educated</i>	
Observe mentor	No: 11	Yes: 4	No: 1	Yes: 5
Observe NQT	No: 7	Yes: 8	No: 1	Yes: 5

The main impression is that observation is not much used as an activity for learning among not educated mentors. To a larger extent newly qualified teachers are given the opportunity to observe their mentors than the other way round. On the other hand most of the educated mentors seem to observe and be observed.

When it comes to individual versus group-mentoring there are small differences between educated and not educated mentors.

Table 4. Individual or group-mentoring

	<i>Not educated</i>		<i>Educated</i>	
	Individual	Group	Individual	Group
	11	6	5	1

The main impression is that individual mentoring is the main pattern of mentoring. Not educated mentors tend to use group-mentoring more than educated mentors.

Do Mentors Enjoy Their Role?

The final question was if the mentors enjoyed their job. This question was combined with a follow-up question of why or eventually why not (N=19). In spite of the fact that two respondents mention that it is time-consuming, all the mentors agree to the question and argue that they enjoy their role as mentors for newly qualified teachers. We have divided their explanations of why they enjoy their job into two categories (Table 5). One group claim that it gives them a lot to see that the novice teachers become confident and that they have contributed to growth and safety (N=7). The second group is concerned with the fact that they as mentors have learned a lot (N=12).

From the first category the following quotation is selected to illustrate:

I am interested in education, didactics and pedagogy. I want to support other teachers to become as good teachers as possible so that as many pupils as possible can have a good education.

Mentors in the second category are occupied with the personal gain they have from mentoring. One says:

Yes, I learn a lot. I have to be updated and sharpened all the time.

Others in the same group claim that when they are mentors they always have to reflect on what they are doing themselves. Another mentor says:

I learn a lot because I can use my competence differently.

In spite of the fact that few teachers have protected time for mentoring all of them enjoy their role as mentors. The majority claim that they learn a lot from being mentors. When summing up the findings we find that most of the teachers in this study are not educated as mentors and the majority does not have protected time for mentoring. Mentors who are not formally educated as mentors tend to perceive and practice their role as support for newly qualified teachers, while educated mentors are concerned with challenge and reflection. Individual mentoring tend to be more used than individual. All mentors (with and without education) enjoy their role as mentors.

Table 5. Why do mentors enjoy their job?

	<i>Not educated</i>		<i>Educated</i>	
	Support competence	Self-reflection Learning	Support competence	Self-reflection Learning
N	5	8	2	4

Note: N=Number

DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of how educated and non-educated mentors understood and practiced their role and mandate. The discussion first deals with the framework of mentoring practice, the mentors' perception of their roles, further the personal benefits of mentoring

Framework of Mentoring

Norwegian authorities have so far not formalized an induction period for newly qualified teachers, yet they have advised school owners to appoint mentors and granted economic support to mentor education. The only political document that says anything about aims and goals for mentor education says that mentors should gain competence in mentoring to support not only newly qualified teachers, but the whole school as a community (KD, 2010). Nothing is said about the framework, like e.g. protected time for mentoring. This means that the political signals are vague and difficult to interpret for principals. Compared to teachers who mentor student teachers relatively few mentors responded to the questionnaire. From the population who report that they mentor novice teachers a large majority claim that they have no mentor education. There may be different reasons for the fact that educated mentors are not used for mentoring as one of the respondents insinuates. This may indicate that mentoring newly qualified teachers still is uncommon in schools. The request from political authorities of appointing mentors is still only two years old (MER, 2008–2009) but research so far shows that formal mentor education is not prioritized in Norway (Harsvik & Norgård, 2011; Ulvik & Sunde, 2013). The role as mentor for newly qualified teachers is new within the organization, and it is not merely a role; it has some features of a profession inside the profession. One reason why educated mentors are not preferred may be that it takes time to recognize the new profession. Unlike many other organizations where educating mentors would be seen as an investment in future, school leaders tend to look at mentor education as a personal gain for the individual teacher and not as a support for the whole organization. They may be unaware of the fact that they have educated mentors in their staff's professional development (Helleve & Langørgen, 2012). Another reason linked to this may be that a new profession within the profession is perceived as threatening to the hierarchical system in schools. Schools can be understood as bureaucratic environments exerting professional and social pressure on newcomers towards existing norms and behavior (Lortie, 1975; Jones, 2006b). Kelchtermans (2002) is concerned with the micro-political reality; strategies and tactics used by individuals and groups in school organizations to further their interests. A new role with a competence characterized as a profession inside the profession may be a threat to some of the members of the existing school society.

Still another reason may be that if team-leaders are appointed as mentors they have to take it as part of their job as leaders and no discussion concerning extra

time and money for mentoring is needed. In this is the case, the challenge of being mentored by a leader should be discussed. The study also shows that relatively few teachers have appointed time for mentoring. According to Roberts' (2000) definition of the role as mentor it should be part of a process that is formalized. If mentoring is something teachers do on top of their ordinary jobs without a defined mandate, can it then to be perceived as formalized mentoring? Norwegian authorities have been vague in their formulations of why mentoring is necessary. Norway differs from i.e. England where the apprentice and competence model is dominant and New Zealand where learning for the whole schools' professional development is the aim. Norwegian authorities have also been careful not to promise anything concerning conditions for mentoring. This may be the reason why there are relatively few mentors, why the majority is not educated, and why mentoring is something that comes in addition to other important tasks for teachers.

Understanding and Experiences as Mentors

This study, which is too small for generalization, suggests that teachers who are educated as mentors are satisfied with the outcome of their education. They are concerned with reflection and how to challenge mentees to engage in reflective dialogues. Through the combination of theoretical input and practical exercises based on their own experienced they see mentoring as a process of reflective dialogues between equal partners. This corresponds to other studies within the same context (Helleve & Langørgen, 2012). Mentors claim that they have gained competence in how to mentor students, newly qualified and experienced teachers. They also realize that they are able to contribute to school development and to their school as a learning organization. The education gives them a competence that seems to support what is earlier referred to as the reflection model (Maynyard & Furlong, 1993; Jones, 2006b). Increased consciousness and insight have contributed to professional development for teachers who have become mentors.

So How Do Mentors Perceive Their Role?

According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) mentoring in “the forth professional age” should be to challenge existing beliefs about teaching, not just sustain the existing school culture. They assert that mentor education should prepare mentors to become change agents.

The results from our study show that the majority of the mentors claim that providing support to novice teachers is most important. When the answers are divided into mentors with and without mentor education, the picture is changed. Non-educated mentors mainly look upon their role as supporters, while the majority of the educated mentors are concerned with stimulating reflection. When it comes to what mentors value as important goals for education, the tendency is less clear, but still the majority of educated mentors rank challenges through reflection highest,

whereas mentors without education believe providing support is most important. If the mentor serves as a supporter he or she will act as a model for the novice teacher in hierarchical pairs where one part knows more than the other. The role of the mentor is to teach the newcomer how to adjust in order to become a member of the community of practice (Lave, 1992). In “the forth professional age” nobody is an expert, according to Hargreaves and Fullan (2000), because there are no correct answers. Learning takes place when novices as well as experienced teachers are challenged to engage in reflection. According to Wang and Odell (2002) a critical constructive perspective on mentoring means that mentors and novices can develop new knowledge in collaboration.

Reports from respondents in this study show that educated mentors use observation as a support for mentoring more than those who are not educated. Educated mentors observe and are observed, while a few more of the mentors without mentor education observe newly qualified teachers instead of being observed themselves. According to Hobson et al. (2009) numerous studies have found that one of the most valued aspects of the work done by mentors is lesson observation. There seems to be several aspects that are important in order to make observations valuable. First that the observation is conducted in a sensitive, non-threatening way, second that focus is on specific aspects of the observed teachers’ teaching and third that it provides an opportunity for genuine and constructive dialogue between mentor and mentee. The fourth and final point is that effective mentors ensure their mentees are sufficiently challenged. If mentoring is understood as newly qualified teachers’ personal abilities and possibilities for contribution to the school as a learning community in line with Langdon (2007) then classroom observation should be used by mentors as well as mentees. For educated mentors this is part of their knowledge base from their formal education. They have practiced peer-mentoring and in some cases also classroom observation. They have become aware of the benefits of mutual observation from a theoretical and practical perspective.

When it comes to individual versus group mentoring, there are small differences between mentors with and without mentor education. The main tradition in Norway is individual mentoring (Handal & Lauvås, 2000). This differs from mentoring practice of newly qualified teachers in Finland where group mentoring is the normal practice (Heikkinen et al., 2012). According to Hargreaves and Goodson (2000) mentoring should be moved from pairs to an integral part of the school society, from hierarchical approach to shared inquiries and from isolation to integration. Traditions that favor group-mentoring versus individual may easier pave the way for the change that these researchers advertise for.

Benefits from Mentoring

A clear finding in the study is that all the mentors enjoy their role. The majority appreciate it because it provides opportunities for self-reflection. As mentors they

also have to look at their own way of teaching. Dialogues with mentees forces them to stop and reflect which they seldom do. Another reason for enjoyment is to notice the positive development of the newly qualified teacher. This experience is in line with the satisfaction teachers have when their pupils learn and develop (Skovholt, 2001). Professional development should be sustained, ongoing and include participant-driven inquiry, reflection and experimentation, according to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011). Research shows that mentoring has a positive impact on professional and personal development of teachers who act as mentors (Hoban, 2009; Hudson, 2007). There are different aspects of mentoring that seem to impact mentors' learning; self-reflection and learning from mentees. The third main effect is the pride mentors experience when they see that the mentees become self-sufficient due to their contribution as mentors. According to Hudson (2007) mentoring professional development should be a priority for education departments. Investment in experienced teachers to become mentors can build system capacity in two ways; first because mentors can educate their mentees, and second because mentors can develop and evolve their pedagogical knowledge by engaging in mentoring activities. This means that mentoring itself is a way of promoting professional development for teachers. But is it then necessary to educate mentors? This study shows that there are differences in the ways educated and non-educated mentors perceive and practice their role. Formal education tends to have prepared the mentors way of mentoring for "the fourth professional age" (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000); mentors that can serve as change agents for school communities. The educated mentors are prepared through education to take responsibility for their colleagues' professional development because they know how and why it is important to challenge to self-reflection. However, mentoring in itself tends to stimulate to self-reflection among mentors with and without education.

Implications

Norway is at a cross-road when it comes to mentoring and induction programs for newly qualified teachers. The political intentions are good, yet they are not yet fully coordinated. So far there is no established national program for induction of newly qualified teachers and no steering documents prescribing how mentors should perform their role as mentors. This is a positive development, especially in relation to the understanding that mentoring is highly contextualized. On the other hand schools are gradually provided with teachers with additional education, mentor education, and this group carries certain characteristics of a new profession inside the profession. In addition to the responsibility of teaching pupils, they are also educated for and have the responsibility of supporting the professional growth of their colleagues through mentoring. Our study shows that so far the mentors' education and additional competence are used mainly to support newly qualified teachers in the induction phase. None of the informants report that they are mentors for

individual or groups of experienced teachers, thus engaging in mentoring activities aiming at whole school development. Mentors who have formal mentor education, as it is developed in Norway (30 ECTS), are educated to take responsibility for adult learners. They share a common knowledge based on theory and science, and their motivation seems to be based on public service and personal engagement making them able to support teachers' professional development (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). We do not, however, per today know enough about how to best develop curricula for mentor education, and we still need to learn more about how mentor education contributes to improved mentoring practice in Norway as well as internationally. Therefore, further qualitative as well as quantitative research on the conditions, understanding and practice of mentors, and how to prepare mentors for the complexities of mentoring, is much needed.

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