

# Supporting a system-wide shift from advice and guidance to educative mentoring

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Jenny Whatman



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New Zealand Council for Educational Research  
P O Box 3237  
Wellington  
New Zealand  
[www.nzcer.org.nz](http://www.nzcer.org.nz)

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## Abstract

This paper draws on a 3-year evaluation of induction and mentoring in New Zealand early childhood education settings and schools conducted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) for the New Zealand Teachers Council (the Council), now called the Education Council Aotearoa New Zealand. The study sought to establish the impact of Council resources on shifting mentoring from advice and guidance to educative mentoring. The paper describes the particular challenges for the Council in implementing new arrangements for induction and mentoring in a highly devolved education system.

Programme Logic and Activity Theory shaped our mixed methods approach. Surveys of provisionally certificated teachers and mentors provided a broad snapshot of the characteristics of induction and mentoring programmes and identified effective practice. Case studies provided deeper insight into how induction and mentoring was operating in specific sites.

Our survey showed that most provisionally certificated teachers were involved in well structured induction and mentoring programmes. Mentoring was most effective where it was embedded in early childhood education settings and schools and where all staff shared responsibility for the provisionally certificated teacher's learning. While many mentors surveyed considered they were effective 'educative' mentors, this was not borne out by many of the case studies.

Our findings led us to conclude that system-wide effective induction and mentoring might most profitably be part of wider initiatives designed to enhance teaching and learning. Any sustained change will require adequate and equitable resourcing for sustained professional learning for provisionally certificated teachers and mentors.

## Introduction

This paper draws on a 3-year evaluation of induction and mentoring in New Zealand early childhood settings and schools conducted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) for the New Zealand Teachers Council (the Council), now called the Education Council Aotearoa New Zealand and referred to hereafter as the Council. The study sought to establish the impact of Council resources on shifting mentoring from advice and guidance to educative mentoring. We begin by defining educative mentoring within the context of a highly devolved education system. We describe the findings from surveys of provisionally certificated teachers<sup>1</sup> and mentors as well as from case studies, discussing where the data from both sources confirmed the effectiveness of educative mentoring and where we found contradictory information about mentoring practice. We report examples of success, where, according to the criteria we developed to assess effectiveness, provisionally certificated teachers were supported by high quality induction and mentoring and an effective mentor. We conclude that a system-wide change from advice and guidance to educative mentoring requires time and adequate and equitable resourcing for sustained PLD for provisionally certificated teachers and mentors.

## Educative mentoring

Stanulis and Floden (2009) consider quality induction and mentoring can “make a tremendous difference in teacher satisfaction, growth, retention and impact on students” (p. 112). Their study used a matched comparison group design to look at the impact of intensive mentoring on student engagement in beginning teachers’ classes. They concluded that intensive mentoring involving mentors working in classrooms with beginning teachers and joint analysis of student data improved student outcomes. In a different but related study Stanulis & Brondyk (2013) also focused on mentoring—and the move to educative mentoring “which places the mentor in a teaching role” (p. 2). Their research explored the efficacy of targeted mentoring that drew on evidence of how mentors need to behave/teach to help beginning teachers see a “specific practice in action” (p. 2). Stanulis & Brondyk examined the mentor role in developing one high leverage practice—leading classroom discussions—alongside the beginning teacher.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education and the Council have invested substantially in researching and evaluating induction and mentoring over the last 15 years (see, for example, Cameron & Baker (2004), Cameron (2007) Aitken et al. (2008), Butler & Douglas (2011) Langdon (2011), Podmore, (2011), and Sankar (2011)). This body of research sought to determine two things: what was happening in relation to induction and mentoring in New Zealand, and what good practice in induction and mentoring looks like. The findings were used to tailor the Council’s input into induction and mentoring in schools and early childhood education settings, including defining educative mentoring and suggesting approaches that encourage a shift in practice from advice and guidance / pastoral care to educative mentoring.

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of our study, beginning teachers were known as provisionally registered teachers in New Zealand. We have used the current terminology except where we refer to international literature, or where we include tables or graphs from the study, or direct quotations.

Definitions of educative mentoring have also been strongly influenced by the work of Sharon Fieman-Nemsar (see, for example, Yusko and Fieman-Nemsar 2008). Fieman-Nemsar (2014) takes the term from John Dewey to describe a learning relationship between beginning teacher and mentor that develops a powerful practice. According to Fieman-Nemsar mentors can be “local guides”, “educational companions” and “agents of change” with the latter embracing educative mentoring to change school culture.

Based on the Council’s research programme and with the aim of shifting practice to educative mentoring, the Council published *Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers* (The *Guidelines*) in 2011 to “support the provision of nationally consistent, high quality and comprehensive support for PRTs in their first few years of practice and to enable them to become fully registered teachers” (p. 1).<sup>2</sup>

The *Guidelines* provide signposts for “high quality induction programmes where quality mentoring is a central (but not sole) component” (p. 15) and effective (educative) mentoring. According to the *Guidelines* educative mentoring is deemed to occur “when an experienced colleague provides dedicated time to a PRT to guide, support, give feedback and facilitate evidence-informed reflective learning conversations” (p. 10). Educative mentoring:

- recognises the range of expertise, skill and knowledge mentors require in this role
- links practice to a view of good teaching
- has a developmental (but not linear) view of learning to teach
- employs a non-deficit approach, with a focus on cognitive and reflective skills, and evidence to advance learning
- engages PRTs in serious professional conversations
- provides planned, and takes advantage of, incidental learning opportunities
- expects the development of pedagogical expertise
- provides effective support so the new teacher thrives (p. 24).

## Beginning teaching in New Zealand

New Zealand has a highly devolved education system with each school being an autonomous entity governed by a Board of Trustees. This means that centrally developed initiatives are likely to be adopted and adapted in myriad ways even where there are clear guidelines and expectations. Induction and mentoring take many forms even though New Zealand has an almost 40-year history of providing provisionally certificated teachers with a time allowance for teachers in their first and second years of teaching (0.2 and 0.1 FTE, respectively) in primary and secondary schools and more recently in state-funded kindergartens.

Early Childhood Education<sup>3</sup> teachers are employed in a variety of service types although only kindergartens and education and care services were included in our study. The Early Childhood

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<sup>2</sup> (<https://educationcouncil.org.nz/sites/default/files/Guidelines%20for%20Induction%20English%20web.pdf>)

<sup>3</sup> It is most common in New Zealand for early childhood education to refer to teaching children 0-4 years; primary to refer to children 5-12 years (Year 0-8) and secondary 13-18 years (Year 9-13)

Education Regulations 2008 stipulate 50 percent of the adults must hold an early childhood education teaching qualification. They do not require teachers to be registered, except for the designated “person responsible”—a manager or lead teacher. However, early childhood education funding provision is higher for services that have 80 percent or more of their staff qualified and registered. Since July 2013 there has been no support funding for induction and mentoring programmes for provisionally certificated teachers in early childhood education services.

Teachers employed in New Zealand primary schools must be registered and certificated. The school is resourced with an additional 0.2 FTTE<sup>4</sup> per provisionally certificated teacher in the first year of provisional registration and 0.1 in the second year. The school provides a mentor (tutor teacher) who is responsible for induction and mentoring including assisting the provisionally certificated teacher to meet registration requirements. The mentor receives an allowance and may have responsibility for more than one provisionally certificated teacher.

Provisionally certificated teachers in primary schools typically have a mentor from the same teaching team as themselves. The time allowance can be shared between the provisionally certificated teacher and their mentor. This time is used flexibly to enable mentors to provide classroom observations and support, and for the provisionally certificated teacher to observe in the classrooms of other teachers or attend relevant professional learning and development outside the school (for example, local provisionally certificated teacher programmes).

New Zealand secondary teachers are also required by the Education Act to be registered. Provisionally certificated teachers in their first year (i.e. first four consecutive school terms) who are employed full-time are a 0.8 charge against the school staffing entitlement, i.e. they will still be employed as a full-time teacher and paid a full salary but will only be required to perform 20 hours of allocated duties per week (only 15 of which can be contact time, i.e. teaching). These time allowances are for them to access advice and guidance from their Head of Department (HoD) or another teacher delegated to provide it.

Provisionally certificated teachers in their second year (that is, fifth to eighth consecutive school terms) who are employed full-time are a 0.9 charge against the school staffing entitlement and also receive full salary. These teachers receive 0.1 FTTE time allowance for advice and guidance purposes, that is, do not teach more than 17.5 hours per week.

There is also additional staffing provided to schools (0.04 FTTE) for each teacher responsible for providing induction and mentoring to Yr 1 and 2 provisionally certificated teachers. This is usually provided by HoDs or other teachers delegated to do it by the HoD. The collective agreements (both secondary and area) also provide for staffing to schools to give non-contact time for those teachers who are responsible for the induction and mentoring support. The extra staffing translates into one hour of non-teaching time per week for each HoD or delegated teacher providing the support to each Y1 or 2 provisionally certificated teacher.

A Specialist Classroom Teacher (SCT) receives an additional 0.16 FTTE time allowance (equivalent to 4 hours per week) for the professional development and guidance, mentoring and induction of their school’s teaching staff. In schools where the roll is greater than 1200, the allowance is 0.32

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<sup>4</sup> FTTE: full time teacher equivalent

(or 8 hours a week). In some schools it may be the SCT who provides some of the mentoring and support to provisionally certificated teachers.

## **A conceptual framework for evaluating support for provisionally certificated teachers**

Developing a *consistent* approach to supporting provisionally certificated teachers with mentoring or specific structured professional learning and development has been a more recent Council concern, with the Council's professional team focusing on improving provisionally certificated teacher induction between 2010 and 2015. The *Guidelines* were intended to provide the cornerstone for developing consistent high quality approaches to induction and mentoring.

The evaluation carried out by NZCER for the Council between 2012 and 2014 sought to determine: the characteristics of induction and mentoring programme, how they played out in the early childhood education, primary and secondary sectors and their impact; how the *Guidelines* and *Practising Teacher Criteria*<sup>5</sup> were being used to support induction and mentoring and how effective they were in assisting the shift towards educative mentoring; and the professional learning opportunities relating to mentoring in which mentors had participated. We employed a mixed methods approach, comprising qualitative data from 21 case studies and quantitative survey data from provisionally certificated teachers and mentors. The case studies allowed for triangulation of the survey data and included observations and document analysis, in addition to the reports of induction and mentoring participants.

### **Programme logic**

We began with a programme logic exercise undertaken with the Council. This enabled NZCER to understand the connections between the *Guidelines* and the intended consequences of this initiative. In essence, we understood the Council assumed that the publication of this resource, along with the newly introduced *Practising Teacher Criteria* would begin to change mentoring practices toward evidence-based approaches described as educative mentoring. Personal support for provisionally certificated teachers was still seen as important, however. The evaluation questions, methodology and design were refined to reflect this logic.

### **Activity theory**

Our case study analysis drew on Engeström's (1987) "third generation" variant of cultural-historical activity theory. Within this framework, participants within systems (for example, mentors and mentees in school and early childhood education services) are understood to be working towards system outcomes. These may include improvement in student learning, more accomplished teaching, or retention of provisionally certificated teachers in the profession. In order to achieve these outcomes, the participants work on work tasks or *objects* (for example, the induction and mentoring of provisionally certificated teachers). To facilitate work on these work objects,

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<sup>5</sup> The Practising Teacher Criteria must be met by every beginning teacher before they are fully inducted or certificated. Most beginning teachers work towards meeting the criteria in their two year induction period. This paper does not describe the impact of the criteria on practice.



participants within the system employ cultural tools (for example, the *Practising Teacher Criteria* and the *Guidelines*), locally specific rules (for example, that release time will be provided for provisionally certificated teachers to allow participation in mentoring) and divisions of labour (for example, the different roles and expectations for a mentor, a principal and a provisionally certificated teacher in a school, designed to support the mentoring process). In this conceptualisation, the mentoring process is understood as a system nested within a wider system that has its own cultural context: the school or early childhood education service. This nested system is the unit of analysis, rather than individual mentors or provisionally certificated teachers.

The analysis focused on the extent to which participants were aware of the *Guidelines*, the extent to which the *Guidelines* had been appropriated (that is, taken up or adapted as part of thinking about induction and mentoring), and how the *Guidelines* had been used as part of the practice of induction and mentoring in various settings. These analyses were integrated to address the research questions. Each case study was written up individually, and using the 42 indicators of effective practice we had developed during the programme logic exercise an across-case analysis was undertaken to identify wider patterns.

## **Surveying provisionally certificated teachers and mentors**

### **Survey design**

The Council and the researchers jointly established a normative sequence of connections between the investments in the induction and mentoring programme, activities, participants, and the intended short-term, medium-term and long-term outcomes. From this we developed a list of 42 features of comprehensive induction and mentoring programmes to allow us to scrutinise the data to ascertain the extent to which these were evident in each setting.

Provisionally certificated teachers were asked to respond to up to 39 items under eight broad categories, including the *Practising Teacher Criteria* and the *Guidelines*, their induction and mentoring programme, professional learning opportunities and commitment to teaching. Mentors were asked to respond to up to 33 items under 10 broad categories including the *Practising Teacher Criteria* and the role of the Council, the induction and mentoring programme, being a mentor, mentoring meetings and mentoring activities, the *Guidelines* and professional learning opportunities for the mentor. There were opportunities for provisionally certificated teachers and mentors to provide some open ended answers.

Nine of the survey items were intended to capture participant views of the presence, absence or frequency of potentially educative practice, for example: “facilitating learning conversations with the provisionally certificated teacher that challenge and support them to use evidence to inform their teaching”; “assisting the provisionally certificated teacher to gather and analyse learning data in order to inform next steps/different approaches in their teaching”. Other items sought information about other features of high-quality induction programmes. There were two cohorts of provisionally certificated teachers. The first cohort spanned 2012/13 and the second spanned 2013/14. Each cohort completed two surveys: one in their first year as a provisionally certificated teacher and the second in their second year. The Council provided NZCER with a list of all provisionally certificated teachers registered during the appropriate time period. Each provisionally certificated teacher was

sent an individual invitation and a link to the survey. Each was asked to forward a link to the mentor survey to their mentors. Many mentors also responded to a survey invitation in the Council's newsletter, *Kaimānga*.

## Analysis and reporting of the survey data

Details of the numbers of invitations and responses are given in Table 1. We were unable to verify how representative the sample was, although a higher percentage of early childhood education mentors and provisionally certificated teachers than their schooling counterparts responded to the survey. Survey data suggests that those who were enjoying a positive experience were more likely to answer the survey as were those who were very negative about their experience.

**Table 1 Number of survey responses, August 2012 to March 2014**

	August 2012	March 2013	August 2013	March 2014
<b>PRTs</b>				
Email addresses	5,495	5,476	5,088	5,029
Unique, valid addresses	5,376	5,389	5,063	4,976
Opted out	72	32	26	76
Bounced	102	46	35	27
Non-blank responses	1,561	1,241	1,544	1,154
Not in induction and mentoring programme	0	259	284	245
In induction and mentoring programme	1,552	982	1,260	909
Answered both surveys		700		496
<b>Mentors*</b>				
Total	234	310	234	234

\* Because of the small mentor sample size, we did not analyse or report on the data in the same way as for the provisionally certificated teacher data (e.g., the number of mentors who answered both surveys).

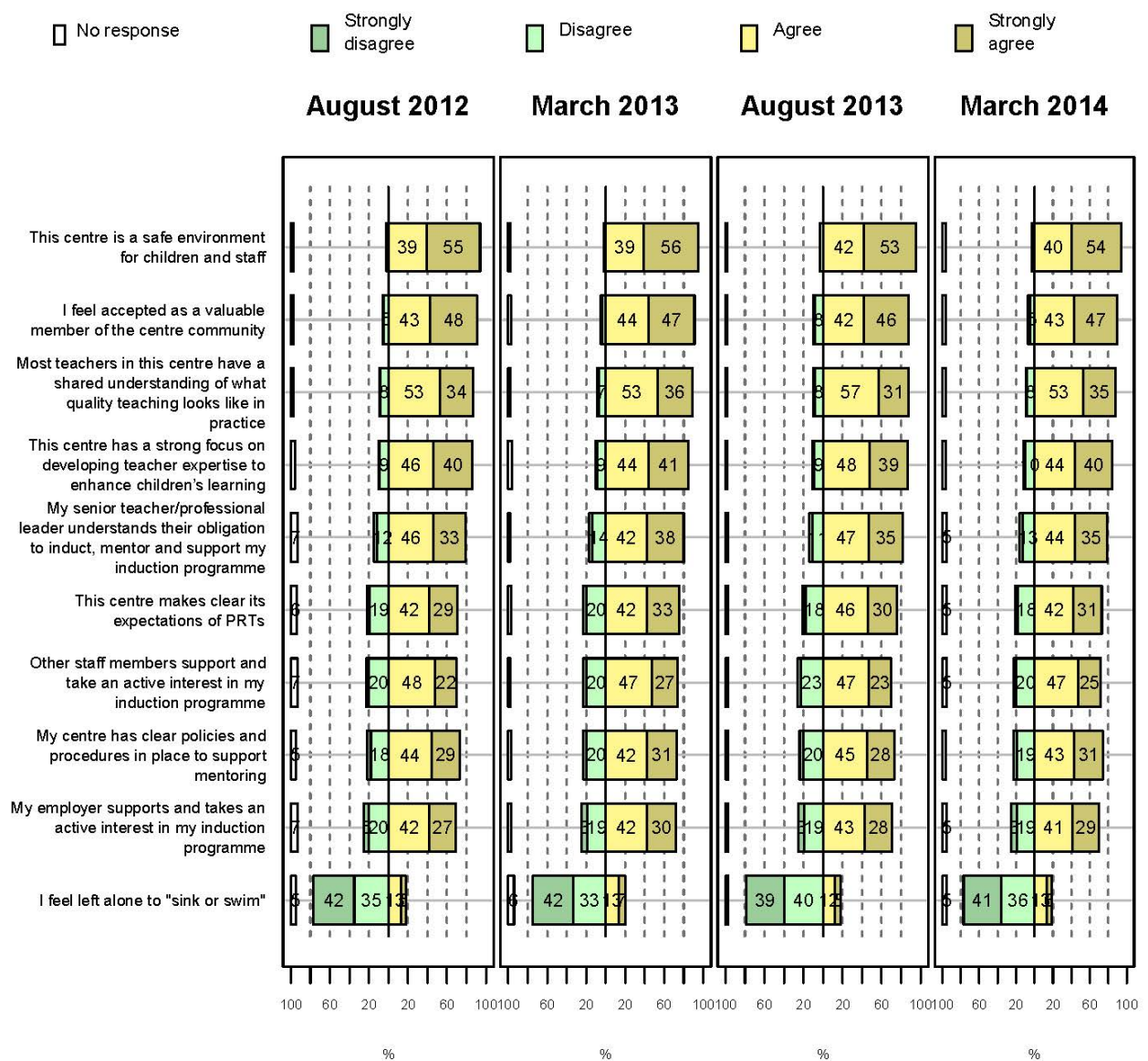
The Cronbach's alpha measures calculated from the first round of surveys and those calculated from the second round of surveys were all over 0.7 (indicating good reliability). The 2012 and 2013 measures for each factor differed by at most 0.04 (typically, by at most 0.02), indicating that the way the respondents answered the question was consistent over time, at least in terms of their patterns of response. These checks were repeated on later surveys because the initial results were so consistent.

The margin of error for mentor survey totals was around six percentage points (it would be wider for subgroups), and was about two or three percentage points for the provisionally certificated teacher survey totals. This meant that for the mentor survey differences, or changes over time of over six percentage points, were likely to be 'real', as were differences of three percentage points for the provisionally certificated teacher survey.

## Survey findings

The survey confirmed the strong commitment most schools and early childhood education services in New Zealand make to assist provisionally certificated teachers to become high-quality teachers.

**Figure 1 ECE PRT views about their centre**

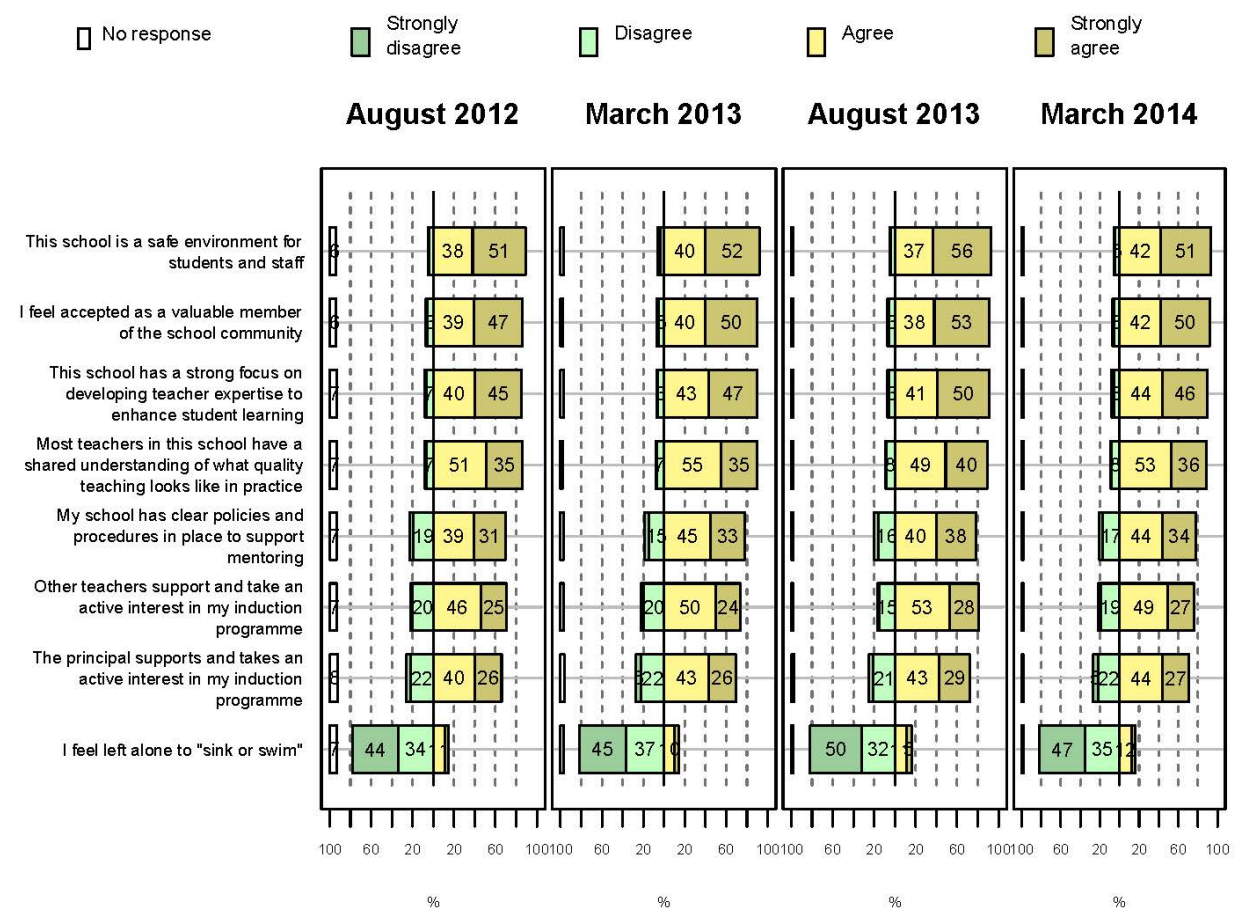


Eighty-seven percent of provisionally certificated teachers surveyed reported access to an induction and mentoring programme throughout their first 2 years. Almost half of provisionally certificated teachers across the four surveys rated their induction and mentoring programmes as “structured and regular”, and over a third reported “informal and flexible” programmes.

Structured and regular programmes appeared to offer benefits over more informal approaches. Workplaces with structured programmes were more likely to have clear policies and procedures in place to support mentoring, and to have other teachers taking an active interest in the induction and mentoring programme.

Most provisionally certificated teachers reported they had a dedicated mentor to support their induction and mentoring programme. We identified that collective experiences supporting provisionally certificated teachers to work alongside others and solve problems of practice together were as important as one-to-one mentoring. Workplaces with structured and regular induction and mentoring programmes were likely to be those that enabled provisionally certificated teachers to participate in communities of learning. Schools and early childhood education services that focused on developing the knowledge and expertise of all teachers were highly likely to engage in effective mentoring practices.

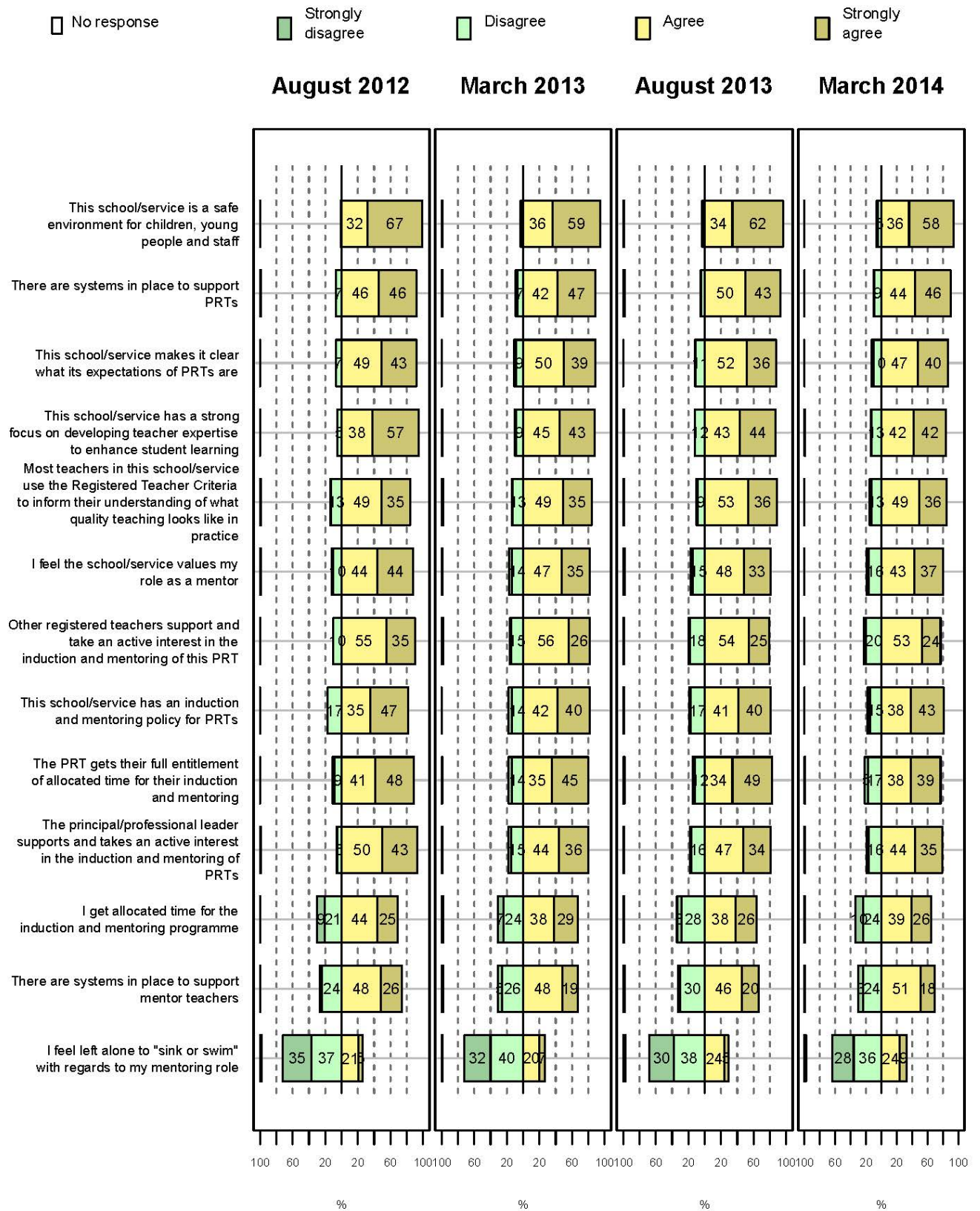
**Figure 2 Primary and secondary PRT views about their schools**



Provisionally certificated teachers and mentors were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements about their working environment and support provided in that context for the provisionally certificated teacher and the mentor. The following figures show respondents' perceptions of these. These statements encompassed the contextual support required for one-on-one mentoring that the programme logic identified. Early childhood education and schooling data for provisionally certificated teachers is presented separately to reflect different contexts but tells a similar story.

There was evidence of strong commitment from provisionally certificated teachers to the teaching profession and mentor commitment to mentoring provisionally certificated teachers. As Figure 1 and Figure 2 show, high proportions of provisionally certificated teachers surveyed agreed that they felt accepted as valuable members of their school or workplace, and 50 percent strongly agreed. Not all mentors reported that their workplace was supportive of their mentoring roles (see the fifth item, Figure 3). A relatively high proportion of provisionally certificated teachers considered that the leader of their school or early childhood education service was not strongly involved in supporting their induction. One of the other statements that provisionally certificated teachers and mentors were least likely to agree with was that their service or centre had systems, policies and procedures in place to formally support induction and mentoring.

**Figure 3 Mentors' views of their school's or centre's support for PRTs**



## Affirming the mentor role

I absolutely enjoy being a mentor and encouraging new teachers to develop as professionals / reflect on their practice and learn from each other. I have grown as a mentor in the last few years—gained a lot of confidence in my own ability as a mentor. (Mentor survey)

Mentors whose responses indicated they had a sound grasp of curriculum and learning and who had engaged in professional learning relevant to induction and mentoring appeared better able to provide targeted support to provisionally certificated teachers and to broker opportunities for them to learn from knowledgeable colleagues.

About two-thirds of mentors surveyed strongly agreed mentoring had had positive impacts on their own teaching and on their school / early childhood education service. The vast majority intended to continue their mentor role in the long term, suggesting that mentoring was a source of professional satisfaction. A very positive impact reported by mentors was their belief that mentoring helped them to develop their own teaching practice as well as to support the professional learning of other teachers.

Primary teachers and mentors were most likely to report positively on arrangements for release from teaching duties for induction and mentoring. Secondary schools, which frequently have large numbers of provisionally certificated teachers, reported insufficient common release time for quality mentoring. Larger secondary schools sometimes had access to discretionary funding, and some had invested in significant support arrangements for their provisionally certificated teachers. There appeared to be a need for greater mentor funding to be available to all secondary schools.

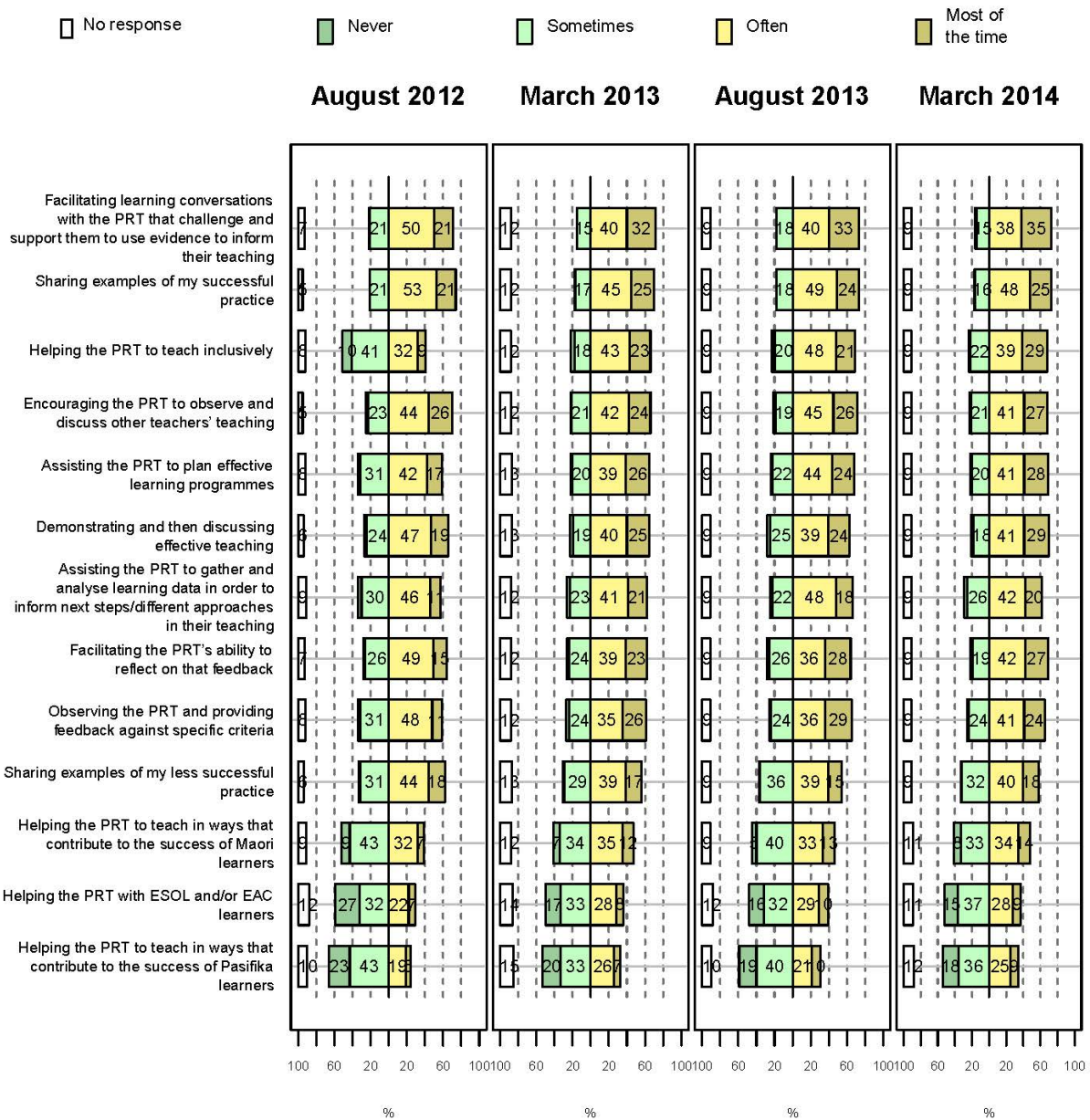
It appeared that the minimal resourcing available to support provisionally certificated teachers in the early childhood education sector had exacerbated the challenges this sector faced. The early childhood education sector attempted several approaches to provide support, and these appeared to help provisionally certificated teachers to use the *Practising Teacher Criteria*. However, in many instances the support provided by early childhood education employers was much less frequent than that provided for teachers in the schooling sector. This study did not show that funding in itself can assure quality induction and mentoring programmes, but without it induction and mentoring is unlikely to be effective. The findings emphasised that quality mentoring requires allocated time for mentoring.

To determine the kinds of mentoring support being offered we asked mentors to report on their use of 13 strategies identified as likely to support provisionally certificated teachers by selecting 'never', 'sometimes', 'often' or 'most of the time' for each item. Figure 4 presents mentors' responses to these items. The patterns did not change over the four surveys. Mentor responses have been combined because the number in each sector is small.

Strategies that mentors were most likely to use, and one therefore assumes were strategies they were most confident using, related to using evidence to inform teaching, sharing successful practice and helping the provisionally certificated teacher to teach inclusively. Mentors indicated they were least comfortable supporting provisionally certificated teachers to teach Māori, Pasifika, ESOL and EAC learners. Clearly this is an area of need for all teachers and is indeed a strong imperative in government-funded professional learning contracts. These results suggested that most mentors'

practice was educational. The case studies indicated that the picture is unlikely to be this positive. We discuss this more fully in the next section.

**Figure 4 Mentors’ processes to help PRTs’ teaching**



Almost two-thirds of mentors surveyed consistently reported they had the expertise required to mentor their provisionally certificated teachers in most areas. Some mentors reported they already had all the skills they needed to mentor effectively, suggesting that some “may not know what they don’t know”. Others appeared unaware of the opportunities that were available to them.

While it is possible that confident mentors may have been more likely to participate in the survey, the case studies suggested mentor confidence in mentoring was not an objective measure of their mentoring practice. Most of the external professional learning opportunities available to mentors were insufficient to build significant skills. There were many mentors who had yet to access this



professional learning, or other professional development that could begin to build their mentoring knowledge and skills. Where mentors reported professional learning as having had an impact on their practice, this was most likely to have been in relation to understanding the *Practising Teacher Criteria* and/or the *Guidelines*.

With the exception of some university qualifications, opportunities for external professional learning for mentors were not well aligned with the literature on effective professional learning. One-off professional development courses, especially when significant shifts in practice are required, are useful for conveying information but unlikely to have a significant impact on practice. Mentor learning is likely to be more effective when it is sustained over a period of time, with opportunity for follow-up activities, ongoing support and consolidation of learning (Cordingley, Bell, Thomason, & Firth, 2005).

Mentors are likely to benefit from ongoing participation in seminars “organized around the practice of mentoring”, together with other teacher-mentors and teacher educators (Bullough, 2005, p. 153). Such seminars could contribute to building a learning community of mentors by “helping to overcome mentor isolation, facilitating the development of a shared discourse for mentoring, and enhancing mentors’ skill development through conversations about mentoring practice and pedagogy” (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009, p. 212).

## **Case studies of induction and mentoring**

### **Case study design and visits**

At the beginning of the evaluation we drew up a case study design that allowed for a pilot to test our observation instruments, followed by four phases of field work in a variety of sites across New Zealand. Each phase was over a 6-month period. The design allowed for a spread of geographic locations and early childhood education settings / school types. We included 10 early childhood education settings, and five primary and six secondary schools, a total of 21 cases. Early childhood education settings were over-represented to provide more information about this sector, which had been less well researched than the schooling sector. All case study sites and participants were given pseudonyms to help maintain anonymity.

We envisaged that the sites would be identified by mentor responses to surveys, because at the end of the surveys mentors were asked if they were willing to participate in a case study. We began by contacting surveyed mentors from the geographical area scheduled for each phase. Although a number of mentors had initially been willing to participate, circumstances had changed for some by the time they were approached. We contacted other schools / early childhood education services randomly within the geographical area to replace them. In the final phase the Council asked us to include case study sites that had been identified by professional development providers as sites they judged likely to be demonstrating sound approaches to induction and mentoring.

One or two researchers visited each site for 1 to 3 days, depending on the number of participants to be interviewed. Usually both researchers together interviewed the person with responsibility for induction and mentoring and the other interviews were conducted by a single researcher. All interviews were digitally recorded and notes were taken by hand or electronically. We sought

permission to interview up to four provisionally certificated teachers and their mentors in early childhood education services and primary schools, and up to five provisionally certificated teachers and their mentors in secondary schools. The interviewees were identified by the early childhood education services and schools. Their selection was often made on the basis of their availability and ease of timetabling at the time of our visit.

The co-ordinators of induction and mentoring programmes in each of the participating sites were asked if researchers could observe other induction and mentoring activities, such as a mentoring meeting or a professional learning meeting. Not all schools / early childhood education services were prepared, or able, to arrange for us to observe actual mentoring sessions. We also examined provisionally certificated teachers' portfolios for evidence of whether, or how, the *Practising Teacher Criteria* and the *Guidelines* were used in their induction and mentoring programmes. Finally, we looked for evidence of educative mentoring in observations of teaching, and in minutes of induction and mentoring meetings. The evidence we sought was captured in a document we drew up based on the Council's definitions of educative mentoring as defined in the *Guidelines*. Examples included: "Discussions of strategies are linked to principles of effective practice"; "Teaching observations are tailored to provisionally certificated teacher's goals"; and "A sense of professional agency is encouraged through engagement in decision making about teaching practice".

One of the early challenges in this evaluation was to understand what the term "educative mentoring" meant to the Council and how this definition could be recognised in practice. In September 2013 it was agreed that subsequent case studies would use a template of indicators of educative mentoring derived from the *Guidelines*, and that researchers would look for evidence of these practices in interviews, lesson observations, written feedback from mentors, and the observations of mentoring meetings.

## Case study findings

The majority of provisionally certificated teachers and mentors in the case studies shared responsibility for provisionally certificated teachers' professional growth and completion of registration requirements. While Kauri Primary School had set up the expectations and resources to enable high-quality learning for all teachers, provisionally certificated teachers were expected to demonstrate agency in identifying their own learning needs, and to seek guidance. Mentors were the "first port of call" for day-to-day inquiries, but when a provisionally certificated teacher or mentor identified a learning need (for example, how to address the mix of student achievement levels in reading), consideration was given to a range of ways the provisionally certificated teachers could be provided with assistance. This might include providing time for the provisionally certificated teacher to talk with another colleague about how she managed her programme to ensure that the learners with the greatest needs were provided with more frequent one-to-one reading; engaging additional support, such as buddy readers from older students; and showing parents how they could support their child's reading at home.

Effective mentors<sup>6</sup> kept the ‘big picture’ in mind with regard to their role. They saw their responsibility as ‘walking alongside’ the provisionally certificated teacher through their registration journey and responding to their needs, while helping them to stay focused and to derive satisfaction from their work. A mentor at Wilson College explained that while her provisionally certificated teacher had to complete a portfolio demonstrating her attainment of the *Practising Teacher Criteria*, this did not drive their work together:

It’s not just about the completed portfolio, it’s about the journey that they take in that time ... it’s keeping it moving, you know; you’ve got a direction, but you go right up a hill and down a gully, and into a ditch, and around and over, and then we bring it back to the road.

The mentor also rejected the idea that there was a right way to teach. She focused on keeping the provisionally certificated teacher thinking critically about her choice of teaching approaches by asking, “How else might you do this? ... because next year her class might be different and she would need to consider other approaches.” She also believed that induction and mentoring was not about compliance and competence but “How are they at the end of this? Do they still want to be a teacher after all that? That matters to me.”

While we saw a number of examples of educative mentoring, many of the case study sites did not exemplify this practice. For example, discussion between mentors and provisionally certificated teachers after observations, as evidenced by notes in the provisionally certificated teachers’ registration documentation, tended to be rather general in nature rather than focused on specific aspects of teaching and learning. We also saw examples of feedback that reflected what Hobson and Malderez (2013, p. 90) describe as “judgementoring”:

a one-to-one relationship between a relatively inexperienced teacher (the mentee) and a relatively experienced one (the mentor) in which the latter, in revealing too readily and/or too often her/his judgments on or evaluations of the mentee’s planning and teaching (for example, through ‘comments’, ‘feedback’, advice, praise or criticism) compromises the mentoring relationship and its potential benefits.

This finding echoes those of Stanulis and Floden (2009) and Stanulis and Brondyk (2013) and the research evidence that informed their studies.

In New Zealand, providing government support for provisionally certificated teachers over a long period of time may, ironically, have hindered the adoption of practices informed by newer research evidence and a national campaign to improve induction and mentoring. In primary and secondary schools in particular, the case studies identified some entrenched attitudes of “this is the way we’ve always done it”. Many mentors and schools in the study may have resisted new learning because they were confident their practice was working well in their particular context. With a much less established history, early childhood education services appeared more open to accepting new resources and approaches but were constrained by time and money. They were also concerned, as “new kids on the block” to do well by provisionally certificated teachers by ensuring they followed

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<sup>6</sup> The *Guidelines* suggest that an effective mentor is one who provides high-quality mentoring: a “co-constructive relationship with the PRT” and who “provides dedicated time to a PRT to guide, support, give feedback and facilitate evidence-informed, reflective learning conversations” (p. 10).

the “rules”. Some of the case studies showed that in combination these factors limited experiences for mentors and provisionally certificated teachers.

## Success case studies

The following extracts are selected from three case studies we considered were providing effective induction including, for the most part, educative mentoring of provisionally certificated teachers. In all cases one-to-one mentoring is supported by an investment from everyone in the early childhood education service or school.

### An ECE service

Kindergarten Association <sup>7</sup> provisionally certificated teachers are employed by the Association (KA) but the vacancy advertised is for a specific kindergarten. Senior teachers will suggest to a KA that a particular kindergarten would be a good place for a provisionally certificated teacher: stable staff, effective programme, good learning environment, a head teacher who can effectively mentor. Making progress towards full registration is considered to be the responsibility of the provisionally certificated teacher, who is encouraged to be agentic and in charge of their own programme, but who is given considerable support by the KA and the kindergarten in which they are employed.

A KA-wide seminar programme is an add-on to the induction and mentoring in the kindergarten—it spans a 2-year period and offers a series of workshops. The topics are chosen by the senior teachers in response to needs they see in their kindergartens and are “reflective of core issues around the *Practising Teacher Criteria*”. The senior teachers, head teacher and provisionally certificated teacher see the registration process as supporting “growth as a teacher” and feel that the *Practising Teacher Criteria* should help with this process rather than dictate it.

### A primary school

Kauri Primary School has clarity about the roles of those who participate in induction and mentoring. The school has a policy detailing the purpose of induction and mentoring and the roles and responsibilities of the provisionally certificated teachers, senior leaders and mentor teachers. The senior leaders in the school have overall responsibility for ensuring that systems and structures are in place to support the work of mentors, and that practices are consistent throughout the school. All teachers are expected to demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that provisionally certificated teachers have the optimal mix of learning opportunities to enable them to become “the best teachers they can be”. This is the objective of induction and mentoring at the school. The mentor teacher is responsible for working alongside the provisionally certificated teacher to ensure that s/he has a comprehensive programme of induction and mentoring for the entire period leading up to full registration. Provisionally certificated teachers and mentor teachers are entitled to participate in professional learning opportunities that support their professional practice. First year provisionally certificated teachers get a “handpicked” class. Teachers who are new to mentoring are not overloaded. Mentors have their workload reduced to enable them to

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nzkindergarten.org.nz/about/history.html> These kindergartens are “free” not-for-profit kindergartens with a long history in New Zealand

devote the time needed for mentoring. New mentors are themselves mentored by the deputy as support for their new roles, and they have access to additional professional learning.

#### A secondary school

Ward High School had a very comprehensive operational induction and mentoring plan known by all participants. There were clear role definitions for all participants, and pastoral care and appraisal were kept separate from the mentor roles. Informal networks also provided informal support to provisionally certificated teachers. A teacher had been released full time to support provisionally certificated teachers and other teachers. His time was flexible, which allowed him to provide support to mentors, teachers new to the school and provisionally certificated teachers when needed. He provided non-subject-related support and most of the generic teaching skills training within the school. He undertook generic lesson observations and reviews. He also interviewed all provisionally certificated teachers twice a year to discuss their progress and was available for confidential guidance. Some staff had undertaken postgraduate papers in mentoring, which for one teacher proved to be a real eye-opener:

To be honest with you I have mentored for years with the PRTs and it wasn't until I started actually doing these [university] papers that I realised wow, I have actually been flying by the seat of my pants really, but I was doing the humanistic thing, I was going, you are really good at what you're doing and trying to encourage them, but I really had no knowledge of how to give them constructive feedback and not just constructive but getting them involved in the conversation so that [it was a] learning conversation happening where they were actually reflecting upon [their teaching] and getting an outcome out of it. (Mentor, Ward High School)

Heads of department were expected to provide subject-specific mentoring for provisionally certificated teachers who were in their departments, and other teachers shared the responsibility for mentoring and supporting provisionally certificated teachers.

### **Key learnings and next steps**

The survey data and the case studies by and large confirmed findings of the researchers' previous studies and their professional involvement in the early childhood education and schooling sectors. Beginning teaching is a complex and often difficult business that requires skilful and knowledgeable support. Despite a long history of national financial support for induction and mentoring in schools and a strong 21<sup>st</sup> Century focus on improving mentoring, our evaluation found that mentoring practice remained varied, provisionally certificated teacher experiences were very dependent on local contexts, and newly published national resources were often poorly understood and under-utilised. In part this disparity between intended and actual practice can be explained by New Zealand's self-managing school / early childhood education system which gives individual sites a high degree of autonomy. Lack of sustained professional learning opportunities for mentors, and lack of clarity of requirements for provisionally certificated teacher registration/certification compounded the situation. We saw and read of examples of very effective induction and mentoring; we also saw and heard stories where mentors and provisionally certificated teachers had been "left alone to sink".

The Council has invested significant effort into developing the *Guidelines* to support induction and mentoring. We considered the *Guidelines* to be a potentially valuable tool but our study suggested the *Guidelines* were better received by those who already understood some of the terminology and approaches to learning in the document. Previous research suggests that quality mentoring requires that mentors be well trained. Supporting the learning of adults requires a different set of skills to those required to teach effectively. The *Guidelines* appeared to assume that mentors already possessed the skills required to support and provide critical feedback to provisionally certificated teachers, as well as the capacity to use evidence to guide provisionally certificated teacher practice. However recent reports by the government quality assurance body the Education Review Office (2014a, 2014b) indicate that in many instances these assumptions may be unwarranted.

New Zealand has an established tradition of advice and guidance approaches to induction and mentoring, and changing to a new approach requires a second-order change:

‘First-order’ change is change that is consistent with prevailing values and norms, meets with general agreement, and can be implemented using people’s existing knowledge and skills. A change becomes second-order when it is not obvious how it will make things better, it requires people to learn new approaches, or it conflicts with prevailing values and norms. (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003, p.7)

Knowing what educative mentoring and high quality induction and mentoring look like in practice is certainly a precursor to wise practice but not in itself sufficient to effect widespread change. We have suggested earlier in this paper that changing induction and mentoring practice should most profitably be part of a wider system change. Schools and early childhood education settings that “wrapped” support around mentors and provisionally certificated teachers provided the conditions for educative mentoring.

Another Council initiative – the Appraisal Project<sup>8</sup> could be having some impact on system change, including induction and mentoring. The Council drew on the preliminary findings from the evaluation reported in this paper to develop and provide professional learning for leaders that would see effective use of the *Practising Teacher Criteria* in appraisal systems. In the best scenarios these supported staff members’ learning as teachers and inquirers. The project aimed to provide professional leaders with the opportunity to improve systems for teachers and students to benefit from appraisal as a professional learning process. It remains to be seen if the Appraisal Project, with its focus on inquiry rather than accountability, will lead to a system shift.

## **Research limitations/implications**

It was important to undertake the evaluation reported here from the outset of the *Guidelines’* implementation. Some aspects of the timing, however, could be considered to have limited the degree of potential change we were able to observe, such as insufficient time and opportunity for mentors to participate in sustained professional learning focused on the *Guidelines*, so any changes were likely to have only just begun.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/appraisal-teachers-project>

The survey itself had good reliability, as measured by Cronbach's co-efficient alpha, and responses were remarkably consistent over time. It is possible that respondents reported practices they thought they were doing, or they thought had occurred, an acknowledged limitation of self-report.

It is also possible the sample of mentors who responded to the survey was not typical of the population of teachers across the country—they may have been more committed to mentoring and/or more confident in their knowledge and skills.

## **Originality/value**

In a highly devolved education system such as New Zealand's, implementing system-wide change is likely to be highly challenging and slow to achieve. Our study provides support for the positive impact of ongoing focused educative mentoring, within a supportive early childhood education / school environment where provisionally certificated teachers are inducted into professional learning communities. The study also identifies the importance of sustained and deliberate professional learning for mentors and provisionally certificated teachers if any real change is to be effected. We also provide evidence of the need for clearly articulated and agreed definitions of important terminology if change is to occur. For example, "educative mentoring" is unlikely to occur if participants are unclear about how to describe and enact that practice.

The research also makes an important contribution to the early childhood education evidence base on mentoring and induction—an area where little research has been conducted compared with the schooling sector.

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