

Spring 2024

Understanding the Needs of New Teachers and Mentors

Samantha Michelson
University of Maine at Farmington

Yuan Dongmei
University of Maine at Farmington

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umf.maine.edu/student_scholarship



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Michelson, Samantha and Dongmei, Yuan, "Understanding the Needs of New Teachers and Mentors" (2024). *Student Scholarship*. 2.

https://scholarworks.umf.maine.edu/student_scholarship/2

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at Scholar Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Scholarship by an authorized administrator of Scholar Works. For more information, please contact sotley@maine.edu.

Understanding the Needs of New Teachers and Mentors

Sam Michelson
Dongmei Yuan

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Patty Williams



Background

Loss of New Teachers

- Nationally, 30.5% of teachers with 0-2 years experience were not retained as teachers in their schools (Educational Resource Strategies, March 14, 2024.)
- 30% of new teachers in Maine leave the profession in their first 3 to 5 years of teaching (Johnson et al., 2020).

Why Do They Leave?

- Lack of or poor quality preparation~2.5 times more likely to leave (Podolsky, et. al., 2016)
- Compensation; overly high expectations placed on them; and difficulty protecting their own well-being (DeSmet et al., 2022)



What Are the Issues? What Might Help?

- **EdWeek Research Center Surveys:** 91% of practicing teachers report frequent job related stress, the need for more supervisor check-ins, time, and support around student challenges (Will, 2021).
- **Maine:** 52% of new teachers reported that having a designated mentor or formal leadership coach would be an effective support, with 43% asking for more mentoring within the classroom such as co-teaching, modeling, and peer observation (Johnson et al., 2020).

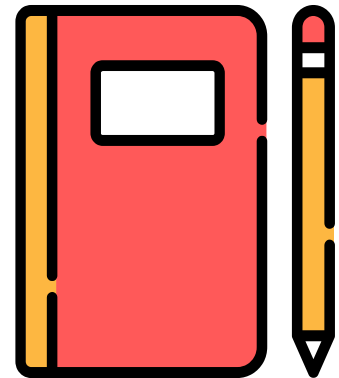
New Teacher Academy Project (NTA)

- 7 school districts in Maine participate in the NTA (60 mentors/mentor program coordinators and 76 mentees)
- Mentees are new teachers (first 3 years of teaching in the district/state, could have emergency or conditional certification)
- **Goal:** Provide support to mentors and new teachers in best practices to facilitate mentor-mentee relationships, and provide support to them in skills to better retain new teachers.



Questions About New Teachers and Their Mentors?

1. What strengths and needs do new teachers and mentors bring with them to the mentoring relationship?
2. What supports do new teachers and their mentors need?
3. How do new teachers and mentors differ in how well they manage stress at the start of the year?
4. How do both differ in their views of the teaching profession and their future in it?



Measures and Frameworks Used

- **Instructional Support Scale** (Modified) from the New Teacher Center (NTC) New Teacher Survey (2013-2016) (Confidence in instructional skills)
- **Job Satisfaction and Stress Scale** from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2018); Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)



Open-ended Responses: New Teachers and Mentors' Confidence in Skills Needed in Teaching

- **New Teachers**=In Carrying Out Tasks
- **Mentors**=In Guiding Mentees Through Tasks



Used Needs of New Teachers Framework (Bartell, 2005):

- **Procedural** = school/district procedures and expectations
- **Managerial** = managing time, their classroom, scheduling, grading, keeping records, setting up classroom
- **Psychological** = management of stress, developing self-confidence, resilience, moving from student to teacher, wellbeing/balance
- **Instructional** = curriculum standards, lesson planning, instructional practices, adaptations and accommodations to curriculum
- **Professional** = norms, boundaries, colleague relationships, professional development
- **Cultural** = relationships with students, parents, families; contextual understanding; community, cultural competency
- **Political** = broader context of teaching and reform efforts

Description of Sample: New Teachers vs. Mentors/Coordinators (n=89)

Question	Mentor/Coordinators (n=47)	New Teachers (n=42)
Average yrs. In district	19	2
Average yrs. as classroom teacher	21	3
% of ELE	59.57%	57.14%
% of SEC	21.28%	26.19%
% of Other	25.53%	9.52%
% UMF Grads	55.32%	45.24%
% UMS Grads	76.6%	64.29%
% Certified as Teacher via Traditional Path	80.85%	59.52%
% Female	89.36%	90.48%
% White/Caucasian	95.74%	100%
% First Generation	34.04%	28.57%

Quantitative Differences in Mentors and New Teachers' Confidence, Stress, and Job Satisfaction

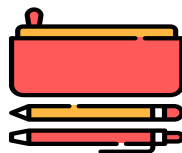
Confidence with Instructional Tasks:

For all tasks, except the following, there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .10$) between New Teachers and Mentors, with Mentors feeling more confident than New Teachers.

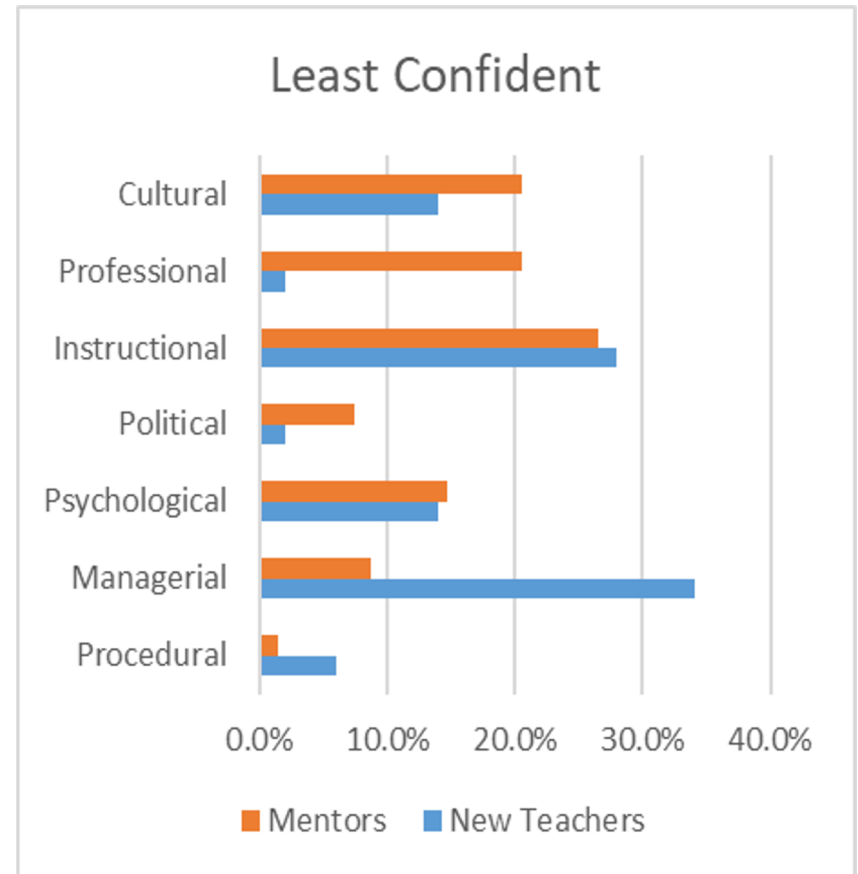
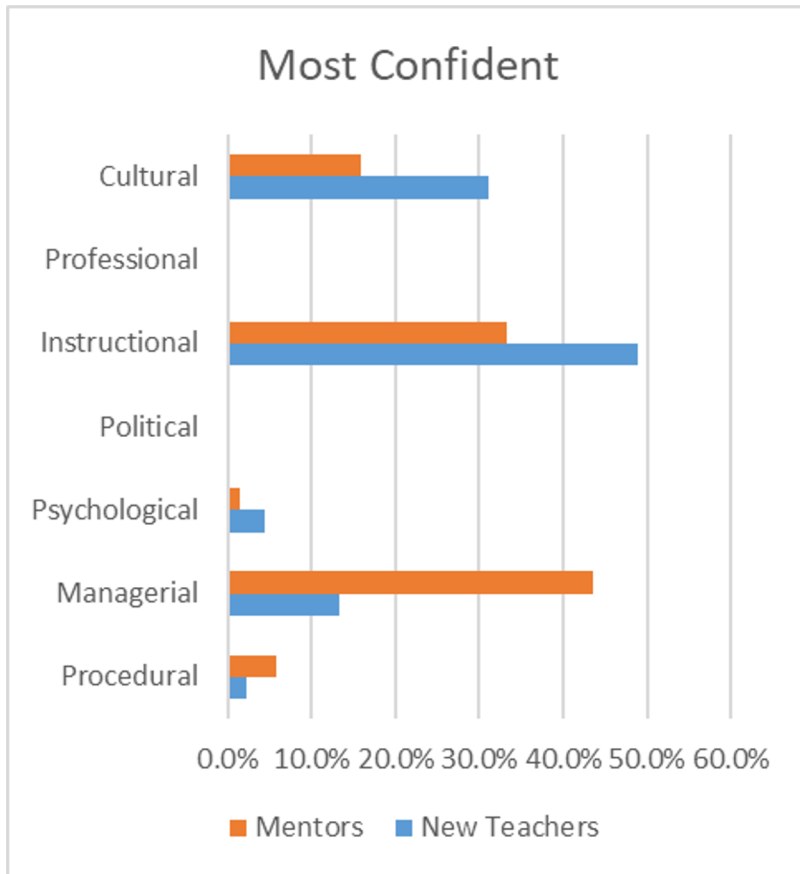
Exception was “less confidence” in “Instructional techniques to use with students who are linguistically and culturally diverse”. There was no difference between New Teachers and Mentors on this item.

Stresses: Mentors reported feeling more confident in their ability to handle problems, feeling that things were going their way, and that they could control the irritations in life than New Teachers. Differences were statistically significant with $p < .07$.

Views of the Profession: New Teachers were more likely than their Mentors to think teaching is a profession valued in society ($p < .07$).



In what areas are you most confident? Least confident? (Qualitative)



Trends in the Data: Similarities

While 33.3% of New Teacher and 48.9% of Mentors report being confident in **Instructional Strategies**, more than 25% of both groups report that support is still needed in this area:

- **Mentor:** Less confident “Culturally responsive teaching/ELL supports. Supporting students with special needs to meet standards.”
- **Mentee:** Less confident “Classroom management, managing stress and conflict in the classroom, adapting instruction to meet the needs of all learners, using data or even knowing what data I should be using to inform my teaching.”



Both groups struggle with the **Psychological Aspects** of teaching:

- **Mentor:** “Finding the appropriate amount of time to spend with my new teachers. This job is too demanding and I often feel I'm not able to give new teachers the time they need and deserve from me.”
- **Mentee:** “I feel less confident in dealing with conflict related with authority and managing the stresses that come with the teaching profession.”

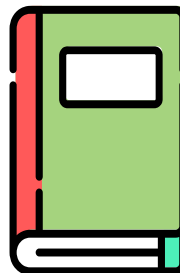
Trends in the Data: Differences

Mentors are more confident in supporting New Teachers in **Managerial Areas**, an area New Teachers struggle with:

- **Mentor:** More confident in “Ability to look at a challenge/problem from multiple angles...a commitment to promoting teacher and student growth.”
- **Mentee:** Less confident in “managing class time and managing time...”

New Teachers feel more comfortable with the **Cultural Aspects** of teaching than their Mentors:

- **Mentor:** Less Confident: “Understanding the Post-Covid 19 Student”
- **Mentee:** More Confident: “developing relationships with coworkers and students”, “I feel I am a very strong communicator and collaborator.”



Implications for Developing Strong Mentoring and Induction Programs for New Teachers

What training do Mentors need?

From our data, Mentors feel that they need support in professional skills devt. (norms, boundaries, colleague relationships) and instructional techniques for working with diverse populations (ELL, Special Ed).

What areas do both Mentors and Mentees need help with?

Both need help in developing/supporting the psychological aspects of the job (management of stress, developing self-confidence, resilience, moving from student to teacher, wellbeing/balance). New teachers need assistance with instructional support. Unclear if they actually are successfully navigating the cultural aspect of the job.

How can a mentoring program help address the psychological needs of all teachers? As a Mentor:

- 1 Acts as an experienced role model
- 2 Provides acceptance, encouragement, and moral support
- 3 Provides wisdom, advice, counsel, coaching
- 4 Acts as a sponsor in professional organizations, supports networking efforts
- 5 Assists with the navigation of professional settings, institutions, and so forth. Non-judgemental and no loss being in this program.

