

Across the Domains

*Examining Best Practices
in Mentoring Public School
Educators Throughout the
Professional Journey*

edited by
Andrea M. Kent
Andre M. Green

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A volume in
Perspectives on Mentoring
Fran Kochan, *Series Editor*

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INTRODUCTION

While there is a growing body of investigations that document mentoring yields successful results, the literature is sparse relating to career mentoring that substantiates best practices in mentoring transitions throughout one's educational journey. *Across the Domains* focuses upon mentoring that begins at the transition from preservice to in-service and continues by highlighting the impact on mentors and mentees as educators transition throughout their professional careers. From grade level teaching changes, to leadership positions, to leaders in literacy and STEM education, changes abound for education professionals. *Across the Domains* presents research that points to what “really matters” in what is such a complex field of practice.

Across the Domains consists of 12 chapters seeking to answer questions such as: What is research-based, effective design for mentoring professionals through transitional points in education? What is the impact of culture on the effectiveness of career mentoring? Are there common practices that are ineffective or need modifying? Why do some programs succeed or fail? Are there gaps in the mentoring research that need to be investigated?

The chapters present research-based insight on multi-level mentoring practices in traditional educational arenas. Both formal and informal mentoring programs are examined, from the perspective of both the mentor and mentee. There are traditional mentor-mentee relationships, e-mentoring, face-to-face mentoring, and blended mentoring studies. Included are mentors from higher education, school-based administrators, teacher leaders, classroom teachers, and preservice teachers. Represented is both a national and international perspective. Each chapter concludes with questions for reflection.

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 focus on the impact of mentoring on early career educators. In “Faculty Mentoring through the Preservice to In-Service Teacher Pipeline,” McMahan, Fredrickson, and Dunlap focused on the impact of a formal mentoring program for new college graduates that was unique in that mentoring relationships were not formally assigned, rather they emerged throughout the program. “A Mentorship Model for STEM Based Teacher Education Programs,” by Martin and Green, examined both the effective practices and areas that needed improvement in a mentorship model implemented with preservice and in-service STEM teachers. The third chapter, “A Quality Teacher Induction Program to Improve Teaching and Learning,” written by Horn, sought to answer questions related to the impact of mentoring on student success and teacher retention in 148 schools in the southwest.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 examine mentoring for educators at transitional stages in their careers, particularly classroom teachers and support areas. “Mentoring Across Cultures: Relationships That Inspire Professional Growth,” by Efron, Winter, and Bressman looked at how cultural implications impact the mentoring relationship between the mentor and both novice and experienced teachers. Morton and Nguyen’s work emphasized the benefits and setbacks of using technology for mentoring across an educator’s career—new teacher and principal, counselor and assistant principal, and cultures. “Informal Mentoring within an Online Community: The MathTwitterBlogsphere,” also focuses on the role of technology, specifically blogging, in mentoring math teachers. Parrish attempts to identify a method for mentoring in a content area where it is often difficult to find mentors situationally located in the same building. Reali, Mikukami, and Tancredi present, “Learning to Become a Mentor: A Study of Elementary School Teachers’ Professional Development,” as an exploration of mentors involved in an online mentoring program of beginning teachers in Brazil. In Chapter 8, “It’s Just What We Do: A Teacher’s Story of Trust, Support, and Friendship,” Allison and Martin provide us with a case study of one teacher’s experiences as both a mentor and a mentee, in formal and informal mentoring relationships, at various stages throughout her 8 years as an educator.

In Chapters 9, 10, 11, and 12 authors present mentoring opportunities for teacher leaders, both in the capacity of mentor and mentee. In Chapter 9, “The Mentoring Pyramid: A Case Study of Mentorship,” Brannan and Kent explore a mentoring pyramid whereby a graduate student in a reading specialist program is mentored by a professor while simultaneously the graduate student is mentoring an experienced classroom teacher implementing a new literacy curriculum. In “Mentoring Mathematics Teacher Leaders: Guiding the Transition from Classroom Teacher to Agent of Change,” Baker, Bailey, Hjalmarson, and King examine two mentoring network groups that were developed to support the transition from classroom

teachers to teacher leaders for mathematics educators. In Collet's work, "Scaffolds for Change: The Gradual Increase of Responsibility Mentoring Model," we see the metamorphoses of classroom teachers through a collective case study design as participants experience the challenges of transitioning from teacher to teacher (literacy) leaders in. Chapter 12, "Reigniting the Small Schools Movement in the Age of Charters," brings the book to a resounding close as Rhoden demonstrates how small learning communities can transform the culture of a school, including greater mentorship and collaboration.

As you read the book, we encourage you to consider the role of mentoring educators through transitions such as moving from preservice to inservice teaching; grade-level changes or moving to a new school; mentoring teacher leaders as they become academic coaches; mentoring administrators; and the mentoring of other school support faculty. You will read studies that aim to identify best-practices, defined by Searby and Brondyk (2015) as effective, empirically proven, and achieve the stated purpose. Best practices in mentoring are revealed, as well as areas that need improvement. We encourage you to read, reflect, and discuss these chapters with colleagues as we work together to continually refine best practices to grapple with the complexities of mentoring.

This work is specifically aligned with the book series, *Perspectives on Mentoring*. Generally, professionals across a wide array of contexts will agree that mentoring has become a critical component to the success of those entering a new career or making a transition within their profession. This research is part of the book series, with a specific focus on providing empirical support for determining best practices in mentoring to such an extent that a conceptual framework can begin to take shape. This book presents research-based insight on multi-level mentoring practices in traditional educational arenas, focusing on mentoring educators through their professional career changes.

—Andrea M. Kent
André M. Green