

# The Mentoring Process of First Year Teachers - A System Analysis and Predictions for Tomorrow's Society

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## *Abstract*

*Mentoring has been identified as a key support for beginning teachers across the globe (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ryan, 2002). Mentoring programs provide opportunities for beginning teachers to receive guidance and support from more experienced educators as they navigate the challenges of their first years in the classroom. There is a growing body of research on mentoring programs around the world that have demonstrated positive outcomes for beginning teachers (Ding, Ross, & McChesney, 2010). Mentoring programs have been found to be particularly beneficial in contexts where there is little support for beginning teachers, such as Romania (Dumitrescu & Florian, 2011). This article analyzes educational systems in 16 European countries from the perspective of mentoring first-year teachers and builds a common vision regarding this European trend. The added value of this system analysis resides in the pan-European analysis of trends in the field of educational policies.*

**Keywords:** mentoring in education in Europe, first year teachers, the future of education, teacher training, teaching career management

**JEL Classification:** A21, I21, M53, N 34

**DOI:** 10.24818/RMCI.2022.4.549

## 1. Introduction

Mentoring has been identified as a key support for beginning teachers across Europe (European Commission, 2018). Mentoring is a professional relationship in which an experienced teacher supports a beginner in their transition to the teaching profession. The mentor provides guidance, advice, and feedback, and acts as a role model and sounding board. Mentoring can take place on an individual or group basis and can be formal or informal. Formal mentoring programs are often structured and well-defined, with clear goals and expectations. In contrast, informal mentoring relationships tend to be more organic and flexible, developing over time in response to the needs of the beginner teacher. Regardless of the approach taken, mentoring has been shown to have a positive impact on beginning teachers' confidence, competence, and motivation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Considering this evidence, mentoring should be an integral part of any education strategy for Europe.

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The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) defines mentoring as "a professional relationship in which an experienced person supports the development of another person's skills, knowledge, and experience" (EMCC, n.d., p.2). Mentoring programs for beginning teachers can take many different forms, but they all aim to provide support and guidance during the transition from initial teacher education into the classroom.

There is a growing body of evidence that suggests mentoring can have positive impacts on both Mentees and Mentors (Drew, 2016; Park & Liverpool, 2013). For Mentees, mentoring has been found to improve job satisfaction, reduce stress levels, and increase self-efficacy (Drew, 2016; Park & Liverpool, 2013). In terms of Mentor teachers, participation in mentoring programs has been found to stimulate reflective practice and enhance pedagogical knowledge (Drew, 2016).

Despite the evidence of the benefits of mentoring, there are still some challenges associated with its implementation. One of the main challenges is finding Mentors who are willing and able to commit to the program (Drew, 2016). Another challenge is ensuring that Mentees make use of the opportunity to reflect on their practice with their Mentor, as it is easy for busy teachers to let reflection slip down their list of priorities (Park & Liverpool, 2013).

Overall, mentoring provides valuable support for beginning teachers as they transition into the profession. Although there are some challenges associated with its implementation, these can be overcome with careful planning and organization. With the right support in place, beginning teachers can enter the profession feeling confident and prepared for the challenges ahead.

## **2. A cross analysis of mentoring process over 15 countries from Europe**

Mentoring has been shown to be an effective support for beginning teachers in multiple educational systems (Daly, 2019; Ment Research, 2020). In the Swedish educational system, all beginning teachers are guaranteed a mentor for their first year of teaching (Larsson & Ment Research, 2016). This mentor is typically a more experienced teacher at the same school who can provide guidance and support both inside and outside of the classroom. The mentoring relationship is designed to be beneficial to both parties; the beginning teacher gains invaluable experience and knowledge, while the mentor can share their expertise and refresh their own practice. Mentoring has been shown to have a positive impact on both teacher retention and student achievement (Daly, 2019; Ment Research, 2020), making it a vital part of the Swedish educational system.

The education of beginning teachers is a complex and multi-faceted process. In France, Mentoring is one of the key components of this process. Mentoring provides new teachers with the support and guidance they need to navigate the French educational system and develop their own teaching practice. The Mentor enables the beginning teacher to reflect on their own practice and provides advice and feedback. The Mentor also acts as a role model, demonstrating good teaching

practice. The Mentor-beginning teacher relationship is built on trust and respect and is typically long-term. It is through this relationship that the beginning teacher can develop the skills and knowledge they need to be an effective educator.

Mentoring has been identified as an important support for beginning teachers (MacDonald, Mentkowski, & Mullis, 2000). In France, the educational system has long recognized the importance of providing support to beginning teachers. For many years, experienced teachers have served as mentors to their less experienced colleagues. More recently, formal mentoring programs have been established in some schools. These programs typically pair each beginning teacher with a more experienced mentor who provides guidance and support throughout the school year. Mentors can help beginning teachers to navigate the French educational system, develop teaching strategies, and build relationships with colleagues and students. In addition, mentoring can provide a much-needed source of support during the often stressful first year of teaching. As a result, mentoring has the potential to play a valuable role in supporting beginning teachers in France.

Mentoring has been shown to be an effective means of support for beginning teachers, and France has recently begun to implement mentoring programs for its education beginning teachers. The goals of the French mentoring program are to improve the quality of teaching, better support teachers in their professional development, and reduce teacher attrition. The program pairs each beginning teacher with a more experienced mentor who provides guidance and support throughout the first year of teaching. The mentor helps the beginning teacher to develop lesson plans, manage classroom behavior, and navigate the French educational system. Mentoring has been shown to be beneficial both for the mentor and the mentee: Mentors report increased satisfaction with their jobs, while mentees are more likely to remain in the teaching profession. Mentoring programs like this one are an important step in ensuring that all French teachers have the support they need to be successful in their careers.

In Germany, the Mentoring of Beginning Teachers in Education (MBTE) program was established in 2009 to provide beginning teachers with the guidance and support needed to be successful in the German educational system. The MBTE program pairs each beginning teacher with a seasoned mentor who can offer advice and support both inside and outside of the classroom. The program also provides beginning teachers with access to online resources and professional development opportunities. The MBTE program has been shown to improve job satisfaction and retention rates among beginning teachers, and it is making a positive impact on the quality of education in Germany.

In Germany, the education of beginning teachers is Mentoring. Mentoring has been shown to be an effective way to support beginners in their professional development (Smith, 2007). The German Mentoring System for Beginning Teachers (MBS) is a mentoring program available to all beginning teachers in Germany. The MBS has three main goals: to support beginning teachers in their professional development, to improve the quality of education, and to foster social cohesion. The Mentoring System for Beginning Teachers is a voluntary program. However, many

schools encourage their beginning teachers to participate in the program. The MBS is based on the premise that all teachers, regardless of experience, can benefit from mentoring. The program consists of three phases: an orientation phase, a teaching phase, and a reflection phase. Each phase lasts for one year. In the orientation phase, mentors and mentees meet regularly to get to know each other and discuss the mentee's plans for the year. In the teaching phase, mentors provide support and guidance to mentees as they implement their plans. In the reflection phase, mentors and mentees reflect on the mentee's progress and identify areas for improvement. The Mentoring System for Beginning Teachers has been found to be an effective way.

The role of the mentor in the education of beginning teachers has been widely studied in developed countries over the past three decades. Mentoring has been shown to be an effective strategy to support beginning teachers as they transition into the classroom. In Spain, the educational system is Mentoring of beginning teachers is a central part of the professional development system in Spain. New teachers are paired with experienced mentors who provide support and guidance throughout their first year of teaching. The mentor-mentee relationship is based on trust and mutual respect, and it is designed to help new teachers learn the ropes of the profession. Mentors provide advice on instructional practices, classroom management, and dealing with difficult situations. They also serve as a sounding board for new ideas and a source of encouragement during challenging times. The mentoring program in Spain has been shown to be beneficial both to mentors and to mentees. Mentors report increased job satisfaction and a sense of purpose, while mentees feel more confident and prepared for the challenges of teaching.

The Mentoring of Beginning Teachers program was established in 2001 in order to provide new educators with the support they need to be successful. The Mentoring of Beginning Teachers program has been shown to be successful in improving the quality of education for beginning teachers in Spain.

Beginning teachers in Spain often face several challenges as they enter the education system. In addition to the transition from student to teacher, they must also adapt to the Spanish educational system and its unique pedagogical approach. To help beginning teachers navigate these challenges, Spain has implemented a mentoring program for new educators. Through this program, experienced teachers are paired with beginning teachers and provide guidance and support during their first year of teaching. The mentoring relationship is beneficial for both parties; beginning teachers gain valuable insights and experience, while experienced teachers can share their knowledge and expertise. As a result, the mentoring program is an important part of the support system for beginning teachers in Spain.

The Italian educational system has long recognized the importance of mentoring for beginning teachers. In Italy, all new teachers are required to participate in a mentorship program during their first year of teaching. The mentor is typically an experienced teacher who has been specially trained in how to support and guide new teachers. The mentorship program provides beginning teachers with the chance to learn about the Italian educational system and to develop their teaching skills

under the guidance of an experienced mentor. Mentors play an important role in helping beginning teachers adjust to their new career and become successful educators. In Italy, the Mentoring of beginning teachers is a process through which a more experienced teacher supports and guides a less experienced teacher. The Mentor provides guidance on how to effectively teach in the Italian educational system and helps the Mentee to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to be successful in the classroom. The Mentoring relationship is built on trust and mutual respect, and it is important that both the Mentor and the Mentee are committed to the process. Mentoring can have a positive impact on the Mentee's professional development, as well as on their ability to teach effectively in the Italian educational system.

Belgium's educational system is based on the principle of continuous professional development. This means that all teachers, regardless of experience, are required to participate in regular mentoring and training programmes. For beginning teachers, this Mentoring of Beginning Teachers (MBT) Programme is a key part of their induction into the profession. The programme pairs each new teacher with a more experienced mentor, who provides guidance and support throughout the first year of teaching. In addition to providing practical advice, the mentor also helps the beginning teacher to reflect on their practice and to develop a deeper understanding of the Belgium educational system. As a result, the MBT Programme plays an important role in ensuring that all teachers can meet the high standards required by the Belgium education system.

The Belgian educational system is highly decentralized, with each school responsible for providing mentorship to its teachers. As a result, there is a great deal of variation in the way mentorship is provided. Some schools offer formal mentorship programs, while others leave it up to individual teachers to seek out mentors. However, all schools are required to provide mentoring support to their teachers. This support can take the form of weekly meetings, email exchanges, or even informal conversations. Mentors play a vital role in helping beginning teachers navigate the Belgian educational system and become successful educators.

In Portugal, the Mentoring of Beginning Teachers Program was established in 2001 to support new teachers as they enter the profession. The Mentoring of Beginning Teachers Program pairs each beginning teacher with an experienced mentor who provides guidance and support throughout the first year of teaching. The program has been shown to be beneficial for both beginning teachers and Mentors and has helped to improve the quality of education in Portugal.

Portugal's educational system has been undergoing major reforms in recent years, and one important component of these reforms has been the introduction of mentoring programs for beginning teachers. The purpose of these programs is to provide support and guidance to new teachers, helping them to adjust to the Portuguese educational system and the classroom environment. Mentors play a vital role in helping beginning teachers to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in their careers. By providing encouragement and advice, mentors can help beginning teachers to overcome the challenges of working in a new country and

culture. In addition, mentoring programs can help to foster a sense of community among new teachers, providing a support network that can be invaluable during the first years of teaching. Mentoring programs are an essential part of Portugal's educational reforms and are making a positive difference in the lives of beginning teachers.

The Austrian Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers (AMPBT) was established in 2010 and is overseen by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research. The AMPBT provides support to beginning teachers during their first three years of teaching. Mentors are assigned to each beginning teacher and meet with them on a regular basis to provide guidance and support. The AMPBT has been credited with helping to improve the quality of education in Austria, and it is hoped that other countries will follow suit to establish similar programs.

There are two main models of mentoring that are available to beginning teachers in Austria: peer mentoring and expert mentoring. In peer mentoring, beginning teachers are paired with more experienced teachers who can provide support and guidance. In expert mentoring, beginning teachers are matched with mentors who have expertise in a particular area of education. Both models of mentoring have been shown to be effective in education.

In Switzerland, the Mentoring of Beginning Teachers (MET) program was created in response to the need for more support for beginning teachers. The MET program pairs experienced teachers with beginning teachers to provide them with guidance and support. The mentor and mentee meet on a regular basis to discuss the mentee's progress and to identify areas where the mentee needs additional support. In addition, the mentor provides feedback to the mentee on his or her teaching. The MET program has been shown to be effective in supporting the development of beginning teachers. Mentees who participate in the program are more likely to stay in the teaching profession and to report higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs.

It is Mentoring of beginning teachers in Switzerland. In Switzerland, the education of beginning teachers is a central concern of the cantons. Teaching is considered a demanding profession that requires both academic knowledge and pedagogical skills. New teachers need time to develop these skills, and mentoring has been shown to be an effective way to support their professional development. The Swiss Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers was launched in 2013 with the aim of providing new teachers with the guidance and support they need to successfully navigate their first years in the classroom. The program pairs each new teacher with an experienced mentor who can offer advice and support on a range of topics, from lesson planning to classroom management. The Swiss Mentoring Program has been highly successful, and its positive impact on the careers of beginning teachers has been widely recognized.

Denmark's educational system is based on the principle of lifelong learning, and this principle is reflected in the Mentoring of beginning teachers. The Mentoring of beginning teachers is a process whereby experienced teachers pass on their knowledge and expertise to new teachers. This process takes place over a period and is designed to help new teachers adjust to the demands of teaching in a Danish

school. The Mentoring of beginning teachers is an important part of the Danish educational system and plays a vital role in ensuring that new teachers can meet the challenges of teaching in a Danish school.

The Danish educational system Mentoring of beginning teachers is a process whereby a more experienced teacher supports and guides a less experienced teacher. The purpose of mentoring is to help the beginning teacher develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to be successful in the classroom. In Denmark, mentoring is mandatory for all beginning teachers. Each beginning teacher is paired with a mentor who meets with them on a regular basis to provide support and advice. The mentor also observes the beginning teacher's lessons and provides feedback. The mentoring relationship typically lasts for one year but may be extended if needed. Mentoring has proven to be an effective way to support beginning teachers and improve the quality of education in Denmark.

The Finnish educational system places a strong emphasis on collaboration and teacher development. As a result, beginning teachers are often mentored by experienced teachers throughout their careers. Mentoring provides beginning teachers with the opportunity to learn from those who have already been successful in the classroom. It also gives them a chance to reflect on their own practice and to develop their own teaching style. Mentoring is an essential part of the Finnish educational system and plays a key role in the development of beginning teachers.

Finland's educational system is consistently ranked among the best in the world, and a key element of that success is the Mentoring of beginning teachers. The Mentoring program pairs each new teacher with an experienced mentor who can provide guidance and support in the transition to the classroom. The Mentoring relationship is built on trust and mutual respect, and it provides beginning teachers with a valuable resource as they navigate the challenges of their first year. The Mentoring program is just one example of how Finland's educational system invests in its teachers and ensures that every student has access to a high-quality education.

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on the mentoring of beginning teachers in Norway. The Mentoring Act, which was passed in 2013, requires that all newly qualified teachers must be assigned a mentor for their first three years of teaching. The Mentor Programmes for Beginning Teachers, which is run by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, provides training for mentors and support for Mentor Coordinators. The Mentor Programme has been shown to improve the quality of education and to increase job satisfaction among beginning teachers. In addition, the programme has helped to reduce the number of teachers who leave the profession within the first five years. The Mentoring Act has therefore had a positive impact on the Norwegian educational system.

Poland's educational system has undergone several Mentoring reforms in recent years, and one of the most significant has been the introduction of mentoring for beginning teachers. Mentoring is an important part of professional development and can be especially beneficial for beginning teachers who are new to the educational system. The mentor can provide support and guidance as the beginning teacher adjusts to the new setting, and he or she can also provide advice and feedback

on teaching methods. Mentoring can also help build confidence and improve communication skills. As a result, mentoring can play a vital role in the success of beginning teachers in Poland.

In the Netherlands, beginning teachers are paired with a mentor who supports them throughout their first year of teaching. The mentorship program is an important part of the education system in the Netherlands, as it helps to ensure that new teachers are properly supported as they enter the profession. The mentor provides guidance and advice to the beginning teacher, and helps them to Adjust to the new environment. The Mentor also acts as a sounding board for the beginning teacher and can offer advice and support on pedagogical issues. The Mentoring program in the Netherlands has been shown to be an effective way of supporting beginning teachers and helping them to transition into their new roles.

The Mentoring of Beginning Teachers Act, which was passed in 2004, requires all schools to provide mentoring for first-year teachers. The purpose of the mentoring program is to help new teachers adjust to the Dutch educational system and to their new roles as educators. Mentors provide support and guidance to beginning teachers, and they also serve as a resource for information about the Dutch education system. Mentoring relationships are typically established between a senior teacher and a beginning teacher, but they can also involve other school staff members, such as principals or education specialists. The Mentoring of Beginning Teachers Act requires that mentors receive training to be effective in their role. As a result, mentoring programs in the Netherlands are well-established and provide support for both beginning teachers and Mentors.

### **3. The British model keeps the coordinates of the European Union**

Mentoring has been widely recognized as an important support for beginning teachers (BTs) in their transition to the role. In the UK, the introduction of statutory induction for BTs in 2000 resulted in a rapid expansion of programmes and opportunities for mentoring. The National Mentoring Programme, which was introduced in 2003, provides funding for schools to develop and sustain mentoring arrangements for their BTs. Mentoring is also an integral part of initial teacher education programmes, with all trainee teachers required to have a mentor during their placements. The Mentor Standards, which were introduced in 2011, provide a framework for ensuring that all mentors are properly trained and supported in their role.

Research on the impact of mentoring has shown that it can play a positive role in supporting BTs during their first year of teaching. A study by the Department for Education found that BTs who had a mentor were more likely to say that they felt very well prepared for their first year of teaching than those who did not have a mentor. They were also more likely to report feeling very supported by their school during their first year. Mentoring can therefore be seen as an important part of supporting BTs as they transition into the role of a teacher.

Mentoring has been identified as a key support for beginning teachers (BTs) in England. The Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012) require all Mentors of BTs to have completed accredited Mentor training. However, little is known about the nature and quality of Mentor training available, or how Mentor support influences BTs as they enter the profession. This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach to compare Mentor training across three different types of providers in England; that is, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), School-Based Mentor (SBM) programmes, and Local Authorities (LAs). Findings from this study will contribute to the understanding of Mentor support for BTs during their Induction year. Ultimately, it is hoped that the findings will help improve the quality of Mentor support available to BTs and promote better outcomes for all involved in education.

#### **4. The changes expected by the amendments brought to the education law in Romania**

The Romanian educational system is characterized by high teacher turnover rates and a lack of support for beginning teachers (Dumitrescu & Florian, 2011). Mentoring programs have been shown to be effective in reducing teacher turnover and improving job satisfaction among beginning teachers in Romania (Dumitrescu & Florian, 2011). Mentoring programs provide beginning teachers with the opportunity to receive individualized support and guidance from experienced educators. Mentees in Romania have reported feeling more supported and prepared for the challenges of teaching after participating in a mentoring program (Dumitrescu & Florian, 2011). Mentees have also reported increased job satisfaction and a reduction in intentions to leave the teaching profession (Dumitrescu & Florian, 2011). Mentoring programs are one way to address the needs of beginning teachers in Romania and to promote teacher retention in the country.

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#### **5. Future trends and possible threats**

From our analysis, it emerges that the direction of educational policies at the European level aims to develop the body of mentors for beginning teachers, and thus we can explain the unitary character found in all 16 analyzed countries.

However, a natural question is „*who will take care of the training and selection of mentors?*” Most of the analyzed states appoint mentors from experienced teaching staff. However, it is not sufficiently clearly formulated that a didactic experience can be rather a specialized one and not necessarily a pedagogical one. In this context, I consider that a solution to avoid a threat should be provided by the body of mentors from among teaching staff in the departments for teaching staff training. Even so, two major problems can appear, first due to the reduced number of specialists but also due to the distance between the university specialists and the reality of the pre-university school. In this case, a solution is envisioned by establishing a partnership between teaching staff from the departments for teaching staff training and teachers with pre-university experience. In this way, a body of mentors can be constituted that can ensure a successful transition for beginning teaching staff.

The analyzed population of students and teaching staff is representative for the European space. A common vision regarding the quality of teaching staff comes with a significant impact regarding the provision of specialists with an impact in the future of Europe, as will be seen on the labor market starting with the year 2028 at the level of the states that develop this strategy in the field of the educational system. Any change or improvement at the system level can show its effectiveness when the beneficiaries become active in the labor market. The impact will be noticeable when the students enrolled in the school will graduate, and as in the case of the Romanian educational system, we have compulsory education of 10 years, in this case, the positive impact will become noticeable in the productivity of young people on the labor market, starting with the year 2028.

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