

Variation in Mentoring Practices and Retention across New Teacher Demographic Characteristics under a Large Urban District’s New Teacher Mentoring Program

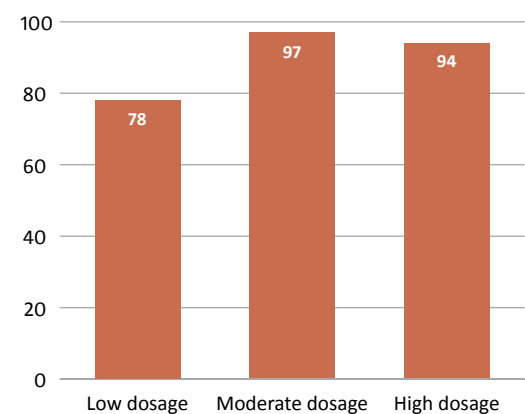
Teacher induction and mentoring programs are increasingly promoted as an effective mechanism for improving new teacher quality, new teacher retention, and student outcomes.¹ This study used teacher survey and staffing data to describe new teachers’ participation in a large urban district’s New Teacher Mentoring program, including mentoring dosage (the frequency and length of new teachers’ meetings with their mentor), practices, and the alignment of demographic characteristics between new teachers and their mentor. The analyses also explored how these features varied by participants’ characteristics and how the characteristics are related to retention. However, the study was not designed to detect causal relationships.

Key findings

- **About 42 percent of new teachers met with their mentor for at least 10 hours a month on average (high dosage).** About 31 percent met with their mentor for 4–9 hours a month (moderate dosage), and 27 percent met with their mentor for less than 4 hours a month (low dosage).
- **Mentoring dosage was related to one-year retention.** New teachers in the moderate- and high-dosage groups were retained at higher rates (97 percent and 94 percent) than new teachers in the low-dosage group (78 percent). Future research could investigate the optimal distribution of time across other mentoring activities, such as observations and lesson plan reviews.
- **New teachers reported spending substantial time with their mentor on topics directly related to classroom instruction, but there were important differences across racial/ethnic groups.** The topics that new teachers most frequently reported spending substantial time (quite a bit or a great deal/all of their time) on were instructional strategies, differentiating instruction, and supporting students with disabilities. The proportion of new teachers who reported spending substantial time with their mentor on classroom management was twice as high among White new teachers as among Black new teachers.
- **New teachers with a mentor of the same race/ethnicity were retained at a higher rate than new teachers with a mentor of a different race/ethnicity, but this pattern was driven by higher retention among White new teachers with a White mentor.** The one-year attrition rate was 95 percent among White new teachers with a White mentor compared with 85 percent among White teachers with a mentor of a different race/ethnicity. There was no significant difference in retention rates between new teachers of color with a mentor of the same race/ethnicity and new teachers of color with a mentor of a different race/ethnicity.

New teachers who received fewer hours of monthly mentoring had lower retention rates, 2018/19–2019/20

Percent retained (N = 222)



Source: Authors’ analysis of data from the study district’s 2019 New Teacher Mentoring program survey for new teachers.

1. Ingersoll, R. M., & Strong, M. (2011). The impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research. *Review of Educational Research, 81*(2), <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654311403323>.