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The influence of induction programs on beginning teachers' well-being and professional development

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CHAPTER 2

The current state of practice in supporting beginning teachers with an induction program*

This chapter reports on an interview study with mentors and beginning teachers. The study's aim was to gain insight into how beginning teachers in the Netherlands are supported with induction programs. Based on the interviews, five main elements in which induction programs differed were identified: (1) the program's intensity, (2) the facilities that were offered, (3) the format that was used, (4) the program's content, and (5) the mentor's role. The general picture that arose was that, though many schools use an induction program, most programs focus mainly on providing emotional support, practical information, and help with classroom management. Furthermore, teachers reported an influence on their professional development, but they experienced an even greater influence on their well-being. The limited content of induction programs can be understood by the finding that mentors focus strongly on teachers' concerns; they aim to help beginning teachers survive in the classroom and feel comfortable. A few mentors focus more on the students' concerns; their goal is for students to learn well and feel well while doing so. This focus resulted in more elaborate and intensive support, with more attention for pedagogy and the moral and psychological development of students. We consider it a challenge for schools and mentors to also look at teacher induction from the perspective of students' needs.

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2.1 Introduction

The most impressive phase in a teacher's career is often the induction period: the transitional period between pre-service preparation and continuing professional development, encompassing the first few years of teaching (Huling-Austin, Odell, Ishler, Kay, & Edelfelt, 1989).

It is a defining period in which 'the student of teaching' grows into the role of 'teacher of students'. Teachers form their professional identity and construct a professional practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a). They also embark on a socialization process in the school.

Beginning teachers have to adjust to the procedures and culture of a school, and they have to earn the appreciation of their new colleagues (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). For many teachers, the induction period is an intense phase in which the learning curve is steep and emotions run high (Huberman, 1989; Veenman, 1984).

An increasing number of schools supports beginning teachers with an induction program: a more or less formalized program that is aimed at supporting beginning teachers in their first years of teaching after their pre-service education (Beijaard, Buitink, & Kessels, 2010). However, the content of induction programs varies across schools and countries. There is little systematic knowledge available about the way beginning teachers in the Netherlands are supported with induction programs. We aimed to gain more insight into this with an exploratory interview study. The central research question of the current study was: 'What is the current state of practice in the Netherlands with regard to supporting beginning teachers with an induction program?' An answer to this question contributes to the international knowledge base of how schools use induction programs to support teachers in their first year(s) of teaching. Also, the findings of this study illustrate variation between mentors and induction programs, serving as a guide to schools and policy makers in the Netherlands specifically, but also offering an informative perspective on teacher induction in general.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Goals of induction programs

The developments regarding induction programs stem from the 1980s – 1990s. In this period, more attention arose for the difficulties beginning teachers might face and their lack of support (e.g., Corcoran, 1981; Rosenholtz, 1989; Veenman, 1984). Several scholars emphasized the importance of comprehensive induction programs for beginning teachers (e.g., Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Huling-Austin, 1992), mainly for two reasons.

First, an induction program is important to sustain the professional development of beginning teachers. Beginning teachers may be well prepared by pre-service education, but an important

part of what teachers have to learn can only be learned while actually teaching. In the classroom, beginning teachers have to put their knowledge and skills into practice, and they face issues that were not addressed during their pre-service education. Some of the issues that many beginning teachers find difficult include classroom management, student motivation and differentiation, grading, and dealing with individual students' problems (Veenman, 1984). Though experience is often considered the most important source of learning, several studies have shown the pitfalls of learning to teach based merely on teaching experience (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987; Johnston, 1994; Zeichner, 1990). It is not easy to critically observe one's own behavior and know how to improve this. A lack of support in the induction phase leads to narrow professional development of teachers. Lortie (1975) described how many beginning teachers become survivors when left to their own devices; they learn by trial and error what strategies more or less work, but without understanding why they work or how they could work better. Therefore, good teacher education needs to include a comprehensive induction program, providing an impulse towards continuous improvement (Cole, 1994). The second reason why it is important to support beginning teachers with an induction program is to contribute to beginning teachers' sense of well-being. The difficulties that beginning teachers have to cope with often lead to feelings of low self-esteem, stress, and sometimes even burnout (Gold, 1996). Gold emphasizes the importance of induction programs including emotional and personal attention to meet beginning teachers' psychological needs, because teachers cannot teach well unless these are met (Gold & Roth, 1993). Teachers may possess good teaching and management skills, but when they lack confidence in themselves, they cannot tap into these skills (Ward, 1987). Moreover, as a consequence of not feeling well, many beginning teachers choose to leave the profession, which is having a serious impact on schools in many countries (Advies van de Commissie Leraren, 2007; Harris & Farrell, 2007; Ingersoll, 2001; Smithers & Robinson, 2003). Teacher shortages are partly caused by increased numbers of teachers reaching retirement, but even more so by the large numbers of beginning teachers leaving the profession (Ingersoll, 2001). An important policy argument related to the well-being of beginning teachers, therefore, is that induction programs prevent teacher attrition.

2.2.2 Developments in induction programs

From a research perspective, two shifts in attention can be distinguished in the evolution of teacher induction:

- 1 From the mid-1980s till the mid-1990s, the emphasis was placed on instruction-related support, necessary for a successful classroom practice (Gold, 1996). Teacher induction was typically viewed from a deficit model: beginning teachers are not yet able to perform all tasks well, and an induction program has to help them to bridge the gap. This implied that

the attention was mainly focused on organizing and managing instruction, and developing instructional routines.

- 2 From the mid-1990s on, teacher induction was increasingly shaped into an integrated approach for providing support, development, and assessment based on high standards for teaching and learning, built on school/university partnerships, and featuring a strong mentoring component that not only consisted of providing support but offered challenges as well (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a). Owing to beginning teachers' focus on learning to teach in practice, induction became a phase in a teaching career: a 'bridge' between teacher education and teachers' continuing professional development.
- 3 Nowadays it is widely agreed that an induction program is most meaningful for new teachers when it takes place in a school setting where it is part of a wider policy of professional development for all teachers. In this view, new teachers themselves are supposed to actively contribute to a school's development, emphasizing that new teachers themselves have much to offer and contribute to education and the teaching profession (Tickle, 2000). The induction of new teachers has increasingly become an aspect of a school's learning community.

In summary, over a period of about two decades, the research perspective on teacher induction has shifted from seeing beginning teachers as rather passive consumers of knowledge and experiences provided by others (deficit model) to seeing them as active contributors to their own and others' professional development (growth model).

Meanwhile, not only in research but also in practice, the attention for teacher induction has increased spectacularly. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) showed the developments in the use of induction programs in the USA from 1990 to 2000: whereas in 1990 about 40% of beginning teachers reported being supported with a formal induction program, in 2000 this number had risen to about 80%. In many other countries (e.g., Australia, Great Britain, China, Israel, New Zealand, and the Netherlands) induction programs have slowly become more common as well. Britton, Paine, Pimm, and Raizen (2003) studied induction programs in Shanghai, France, Japan, New Zealand, and Switzerland and found interesting differences in their characteristics and goals. For example, in France, induction is aimed at 'molding' the beginning teachers into the teaching profession and includes courses and a period of assisting in a second school. In Switzerland, the goal of teacher induction is much more to sustain the development of the whole person. Induction programs offer a large variety of activities, including collegial counseling, co-operation, and reflection. Shanghai and Japan's teacher induction is seen as a critical component in the process of learning to teach and is aimed at developing strong teaching skills because pre-service education includes only limited classroom experience.

Though we have examples of comprehensive induction programs including a variety of activities and a high intensity across different countries (e.g., Britton et al., 2003; Guha, Shields, Tiffany-Morales, Bland, & Campbell, 2008; Luft, 2009; Scott, 2001), in general, induction programs are criticized for having limited content and a lack of a theoretical framework. Feiman-Nemser (2001a) states that most induction programs do not rest on an understanding of teacher learning, a vision of good teaching, or a broad view of the role that an induction program can play in new teachers' development. Also, Wang and Odell (2002) conclude in their review study that the content of the support within an induction program is often limited to technical and emotional support. Mentors often help beginning teachers feel comfortable, but they offer little professional support to foster a principled understanding of teaching (Little, 1990). Few mentors offer 'educative mentoring': mentoring that encourages new teachers to question their teaching practice and develop strategies to improve or refine it (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b). Studies have revealed several factors that often limit the quality of mentoring. The first factor pertains to the school culture. Induction programs, in which mentoring is often the most important component, are a form of collegial cooperation in order to professionalize the beginning teacher and perhaps even the mentor him or herself. Collegial cooperation requires trust in one's colleagues, and that doors literally be opened. Little (1990) noted, however, that though the idea of teacher collaboration has become very popular, the school culture in which teachers have to cooperate has not really changed. Privacy and individuality remain the norm. A second limiting factor is that a structure in which mentors and teachers have the opportunity to work together is often missing. This structure requires resources for both teachers and mentors, but induction programs often fall short (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a). A third factor is that mentoring new teachers in a way that promotes their professional development is not an easy job, and mentors need the opportunity to prepare and professionalize themselves in order to realize this. Yet, they often do not get this opportunity (Athanasios et al., 2008).

In sum, in recent decades we have seen positive developments in the area of induction programs in many countries. Yet, characteristics and goals vary across induction programs and countries. Though there are examples of comprehensive induction programs, programs are often criticized for having limited content and no theoretical framework. Mentors tend to focus on providing emotional support instead of professional support.

2.2.3 Research aim

In the current study, we aimed to investigate how beginning teachers in the Netherlands are supported with an induction program. To this end, we conducted an interview study including 12 mentors and 22 teachers from 12 secondary schools. Mentors and teachers were asked about their experiences with the induction programs at their schools. An important goal of the current

study was to provide an overview of the various elements of induction programs and their variation, hereby creating a basis for further research on induction programs and their influence. The specific research questions we aimed to answer in the current study were:

- 1 What elements of an induction program can be distinguished?
- 2 How are beginning teachers in the Netherlands supported with an induction program?
- 3 What do mentors report on their ideas and actions concerning their role as mentor of beginning teachers?
- 4 What do teachers report on their experiences of the influence of the induction program?

2.3 Method

2.3.1 Sample

In order to answer our research questions, we interviewed mentors and beginning teachers from 12 secondary schools. Our selection of schools represented a variety of induction programs. Since the teacher education institute where this research project was based has contacts with many schools, we were able to select schools that use induction programs with limited content, as well as schools that use elaborate induction programs with a long history of development and improvement. We also aimed to include schools without any form of an induction program, but were not able to find one. Other characteristics on which we based our selection were the size of the school, the demography (urban or suburban), and the level of education provided to the students (ranging from pre-vocational secondary education to pre-university secondary education).

We intended to interview one mentor and two teachers from each school. At two schools, only one beginning teacher was willing to participate in our study, so ultimately we interviewed 12 mentors and 22 teachers. We chose to interview both mentors and teachers for this study because both fulfill important roles in induction programs. The mentors interviewed were the main, or among the main, responsible persons for the induction program at their school. All of the mentors had at least nine years of experience in teaching, and at least three years of experience in mentoring. Three of the 12 mentors were female.

The teachers interviewed had finished their induction period, but had not taught for more than four years. We made sure to include teachers qualified to teach in the lower levels of secondary education, a second-degree qualification, and teachers qualified to teach in the higher levels of secondary education, a first-degree qualification. We did not specifically select on the basis of the subject area in which the teachers or mentors were teaching. Table 2.1 presents an overview of the interviewees.

Table 2.1 Descriptions of the interviewees

Mentor (N = 12)		N
Gender	Female	2
	Male	10
Subject Department	Language and Arts	5
	Science and Mathematics	2
	Social Studies	5
Teacher (N = 22)		
Gender	Female	14
	Male	8
Subject Department	Language and Arts	10
	Science and Mathematics	7
	Social Studies	5
Degree of Qualification	First Degree	9
	Second Degree	13

2.3.2 Data collection

We chose to use interviews since this best suited our aim of an exploratory study researching how teachers in the Netherlands are supported with an induction program. The interviews provided a good opportunity for teachers and mentors to talk about their personal experiences. They also provided the interviewer with the opportunity to react to the interviewees' responses and, if necessary, ask further questions. The interviews were semi-structured.

Mentors were asked about:

- 1 the content of the induction program: its organization, intensity, the facilities offered, and the topics that receive attention;
- 2 their role in the induction program: their goals, how they aimed to achieve them, and their ideas about the process of learning to teach and the induction program's role in this;
- 3 their perception of the induction program's influence on beginning teachers (see Appendix 1).

Teachers were asked about:

- 1 their experience of the induction program: its content, intensity, facilities available to them, et cetera;
- 2 their opinion of what is important in an induction program;

3 the influence the induction program had on them: its influence on the process of learning to teach, their well-being, and their decision to stay in the profession or not (see Appendix 2). The interviews took place at the schools and lasted approximately 1 - 1.5 hours. The interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed verbatim.

2.3.3 Data analysis

The interviews were analyzed in a qualitative-interpretative manner (Baarda, Theunissen, & De Goede, 1995; Maso & Smaling, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In order to answer the first research question about the distinguishable elements of an induction program, we used the interviews with both beginning teachers and mentors. This analysis consisted of several steps. First, two interviews with mentors and two interviews with teachers were randomly selected and read. The fragments concerning the way beginning teachers were supported with an induction program were selected.

Second, these fragments were coded in terms of elements. An element is a characteristic of an induction program in which induction programs differ. An example of an element is the intensity of the induction program. Five main elements were identified, of which some were subsequently divided into sub-elements.

Third, the elements were defined, followed by a description of their variation. One of the elements of the induction program we distinguished pertained to 'the mentor'. It became clear that the interviews with teachers and mentors revealed major differences regarding the mentor's role. Because information from the mentors' perspectives would be considered when answering the third research question (which is fully devoted to the mentor's point of view), it was decided that further analysis of this element would be based only on the interviews with teachers.

In the fourth step, two more interviews with teachers and two interviews with mentors were randomly selected and analyzed in order to check the definitions of the elements we distinguished and the description of their variation. The scheme of elements and sub-elements was somewhat adjusted and the described variation was further completed.

Fifth, the adjusted scheme was discussed with fellow-researchers, and, after some fine-tuning we established a final scheme of elements and definitions (see Table 2.2).

Subsequently, this scheme formed the basis for answering the second research question pertaining to the way beginning teachers are supported with an induction program. Based on the scheme of elements, the total set of data was analyzed. All interviews with beginning teachers and mentors were coded according to the scheme and summarized in a large table. Based on this coding, the second research question was answered. Where relevant, the report of these results in the next section is illustrated by quotes from the interviews.

The analysis undertaken to answer the third research question about mentors' ideas and actions concerning their role in the induction programs was based solely on the interviews with mentors. First, fragments were selected that related to the mentors' ideas and actions concerning their role in the induction programs.

While reading these fragments, we found two interesting themes on which mentors differed, namely, the mentoring approach (referring to how mentors tend to guide the professional development of beginning teachers), and the focus of mentors (referring to what the mentoring was about). For both themes we were able to define two types of visions.

After defining the themes and the kinds of visions we encountered, we read the interviews in their entirety once more. In this step, we looked for evidence and counterevidence for the different types of visions of the two themes. Comparing the evidence and counterevidence from the interviews clearly established similarities and differences between mentors. We report on these similarities and differences, illustrated by quotes from the interviews. We did not classify the mentors since evidence was not always unequivocal for one kind of vision.

The fourth research question concerned the induction program's perceived influence on the teachers. To answer this question, analysis of the data was based solely on the interviews with teachers.

In each interview the fragments about the perceived influence were selected.

The selected fragments were summarized and interpreted per interview. By looking at each interview we were able to interpret the results in their context. A scheme was used to simplify this process. In the interviews the teachers were asked how the program influenced them in a number of areas, including stress, self-confidence, motivation, commitment to the school, and several skill areas. The scheme noted for each particular area whether the interviewees had experienced a positive influence or not.

Based on the interpretations of each interview and the scheme, the fourth research question was answered, distinguishing between the program's influence on the teachers' well-being and their professional development. The reported results are illustrated with quotes from the interviews.

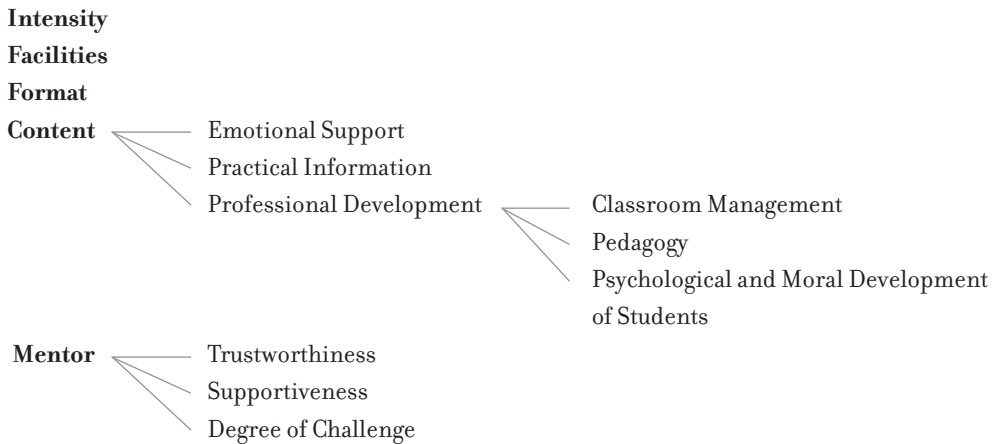
2.4 Results

In this section, the results of the interview study with mentors and beginning teachers are presented per research question.

2.4.1 Elements of an induction program

Based on the interviews with mentors and beginning teachers, five main elements of induction programs were distinguished, two of which were further divided into sub-elements. Table 2.2 presents these distinguishable elements of an induction program.

Table 2.2 Overview of elements of induction programs



The first distinguishable element of induction programs is their *intensity*. The intensity of the induction program refers to the amount of time that is planned for beginning teachers to spend on activities related to the induction program and the period of time during which this takes place. The element *facilities* refers to the resources available to mentors and beginning teachers in order to enable the realization of the induction program. These mainly consist of the time allotted to beginning teachers and mentors to participate in induction program activities, as well as schooling for mentors, creation of a physical space for meetings of mentors and teachers, matching time schedules with planned induction activities, and offering dispensation to beginning teachers from certain tasks.

The induction program's *format* refers to the type of activity or activities that are included in the induction program. Different kinds of activities that are used in an induction program are, for example, mentoring, collegial counseling, observing colleagues while teaching, and attending workshops.

The induction program's *content* refers to the subjects that receive attention. We identified three main areas that receive attention, namely:

- 1 *Emotional Support*, such as helping the beginning teacher feel at ease, paying attention to stress-relief, and stimulating self-confidence.

- 2 *Practical Information*, such as explaining school rules, showing the operation procedures of equipment, and notifying beginning teachers of meetings.
- 3 *Professional Development*, by increasing the teachers' practical knowledge and skills. Professional development was further subdivided into:
 - a attention for *Classroom Management*, referring to the ability to lead students and create a quiet, clear, and organized learning environment;
 - b attention for *Pedagogy*,¹ referring to the ability to create a powerful learning environment in which students can develop skills and obtain the required knowledge;
 - c attention for the *Psychological and Moral Development of Students*,² referring to a teacher's ability to create a safe learning environment, sustain the social-emotional and moral development of students, and help students become responsible persons.

The last main element is the *Mentor*. As explained in the previous section, in which this study's method was described, the results pertaining to the first and second research questions concerning this particular element are based solely on the interviews with teachers. Based on these interviews, three important characteristics of the mentor were distinguished, namely:

- 1 The mentor's *Trustworthiness*, referring to his or her ability to create a base of trust with which the teacher feels safe and comfortable.
- 2 The mentor's *Supportiveness*, referring to the degree in which the mentor stimulates and motivates the teacher in a positive way.
- 3 The mentor's *Degree of challenge*, referring to the degree in which the mentor is able to challenge the beginning teachers in their professional development.

2.4.2 The way beginning teachers in the Netherlands are supported with an induction program

The second research question pertains to the way beginning teachers in the Netherlands are supported with an induction program. The results pertaining to this research question are presented based on the elements and sub-elements of an induction program described above.

Intensity of the induction program

Though all schools used an induction program, the intensity of the programs varied strongly. The least intensive programs consisted of around 15 hours of support, while the most intensive programs offered about 80 hours of support, with the exact number of hours depending on the teachers' needs. We classified the induction programs into three categories. Six induction programs were classified in the category 'low to moderate intensity', consisting of 15 to 25 hours of support for beginning teachers. Three induction programs were classified in the

1 In Dutch, the term 'pedagogy' can be translated as '(vak)didactiek'.

2 In Dutch, 'the psychological and moral development of students' can be translated as 'pedagogiek'.

category of induction programs with a 'moderate intensity', consisting of 25 to 50 hours of support, and three induction programs were classified in the category 'high intensity', consisting of more than 50 hours of support for each teacher.

In the second year of teaching schools offered hardly any guidance. In the high-intensity induction programs, further individual support from a mentor was sometimes possible if requested by a teacher, and in one high-intensity induction program a few group meetings for collegial consultancy were organized.

It is important to note that in all categories we found teachers reporting fewer hours of induction than the number of hours officially planned for. This was partly due to practical constraints, but in a number of cases the teachers themselves chose for less support, sometimes because they had found support outside the induction program, often from a close colleague, or sometimes because they were just not interested in the support that was offered. In spite of differences in intensity, in all categories the teachers we interviewed were generally satisfied with the amount of support they received. Teachers who were supported by a high-intensity induction program experienced the support as valuable to their teaching practice, while teachers who were supported by a low-intensity induction program generally viewed additional support as a burden.

Facilities

The types of facilities offered in a school's induction program correlated strongly with its intensity. Schools with a high-intensity induction program usually had several mentors who were responsible for the support and guidance of beginning teachers and allocated a considerable number of hours for the induction program. At schools with a low-intensity induction program, often only one mentor was responsible for the support and guidance of beginning teachers, with a limited number of hours allocated for induction. In general, mentors received the amount of time that was required for their work in the induction program. Besides allocating time for the mentors, all schools gave beginning teachers dispensation from several standard teacher duties, for example, supervising the students during lunch-break, substituting for colleagues who are ill, and mentoring a class. All mentors received some preparation for their job as mentor, but at schools with high-intensity induction programs this included serious training. Schools with high-intensity programs also allocated specific time for the beginning teachers to participate in induction program-related activities and took these activities into account in their timetables as well.

Format

We found several formats in use to support beginning teachers. All schools scheduled an introduction meeting to welcome beginning teachers, as well as group meetings for beginning teachers in which they could share their experiences, and individual meetings between the mentor and mentee. Often these individual meetings were accompanied by class visits from the mentor.

Though all induction programs (officially) included the above-mentioned formats, the frequency, duration, and character of the used formats differed. An introduction meeting could, for example, consist of two hours in which the new teachers were briefly introduced to each other, the school rules were explained, and the teachers received a school tour. At the opposite end of the spectrum the introduction meeting lasted two days, including considerable opportunity for the new teachers to meet each other, a workshop about 'how to start the first day', and a meeting with the staff. We also found differences in the way group meetings for beginning teachers were organized. In some induction programs these meetings lasted one hour and were mainly meant to provide beginning teachers with the opportunity to talk to each other and 'clear their heads'; in other induction programs these meetings were highly structured, lasted at least two hours, and were strongly aimed at professional development. We found similar differences in the individual meetings between mentors and beginning teachers. In some cases the meetings with a mentor after a class visit took about 10-15 minutes in which mentor and mentee generally discussed what had gone well and what could be improved. The opposite consisted of conversations lasting approximately an hour, in which mentors and beginning teachers, sometimes through use of video, thoroughly analyzed the lesson and discussed how it could be improved. At most schools, beginning teachers were supposed to have two mentors: one general mentor who did not necessarily teach in the same subject department and was formally included in the induction program, and one mentor from the same subject department. The subject departments themselves were often responsible for providing mentoring to new colleagues in their own department, which frequently led to little or no support from a mentor from the same subject department. In practice, most teachers were thus supported by one mentor. Other formats used to support beginning teachers consisted of specific training courses and classroom observations of experienced colleagues. We saw these formats mainly in the induction programs with a high intensity. One induction program also included a day in which beginning teachers visited another school to experience a different teaching method.

Content

All induction programs included attention for the three main areas: emotional support, practical information, and professional development. Still, the attention for professional development was usually rather limited. In most cases the focus seemed to lie on providing emotional support and practical information. In these induction programs mentors aimed to welcome the new teachers, making them feel at ease and stimulating them to become part of the school community. In these cases classroom management generally received considerable attention, while pedagogy and the psychological and moral development of students received very little attention. The induction programs in which there was a lot of attention for professional development were of a moderate or high intensity. However, the degree of attention for the various areas strongly depended on the mentor.

The mentor

A very important element of an induction program is the mentor. When asked open questions about their experiences of the induction program, teachers often referred to their mentor. They did not value the formal program so much, but appreciated the warm welcome by the mentor, the mentor's enthusiasm or his or her capability to observe both good and bad things. Also, when a teacher was not satisfied with the support from an induction program, he or she criticized the mentor and not, for example, a lack of time or the facilities that were provided. Based on the interviews with beginning teachers we identified three important characteristics of mentors. The first characteristic that beginning teachers spoke of is the degree to which the mentor is able to create a base of trust in order for teachers to feel at ease with their mentor in such a way that they dare ask for help when faced with a problem. No teacher complained about having problems with respect to trust issues with their mentor, but trust was frequently mentioned as an important characteristic. In eleven of the twelve induction programs, the roles of assessor and mentor were strictly separated, which the teachers often experienced as an important condition for trusting their mentor. Besides this formal arrangement of a separation between assessment and guidance, teachers also spoke about the mentor's attitude and the importance of the mentor's not judging mistakes or imperfect teaching in order for the teacher to be able to trust and feel at ease with him or her. One teacher reported the following about this:

I find it most important that you feel safe. That you dare to make mistakes and dare to say it out loud. When your mentor makes you feel defensive, you cannot talk about your mistakes anymore.

The mentor's supportiveness is the second important characteristic that we identified based upon the interviews with the teachers. Most teachers felt supported by their mentor. In the interviews, teachers very much appreciated the mentor's enthusiasm, positive attitude, energy, personal interest, and degree of involvement. According to the teachers, these characteristics helped them to maintain their confidence and their own enthusiasm for their work, and they prevented them from becoming stressed or quitting their job. One of the teachers expressed this as follows:

Well, that is the most important. Knowing that 'Hey, I am being supported'. They clearly say what you do well. And that can take you far. Then you think 'OK, it is all right'. And then you can work on the things that are not that good. ... Ellen is someone who cares for her colleagues, she really asks 'How do you feel?' ... Again the sincerity of 'How are you doing', takes away a certain pressure.

The third characteristic of the mentor is the degree to which he or she can challenge the teacher in his or her professional development. A few teachers explicitly valued their mentor's capacity to stimulate their professional development. These teachers spoke of their mentor's ability to observe things, to ask the right questions, to get the teacher to really think about or realize

something. On the other hand, this is also the only characteristic that mentors were sometimes explicitly criticized for. A few teachers found their mentor unable to help them in their teaching practice or stimulate their professional development. Mentors were too general in their comments, not clear, or 'just not helpful'. One of these teachers said:

My mentor, he was a really kind man, but he was more like.. 'stand on the ship with two feet; you're the captain'. He says you stand there well, but what does that mean? That you literally stand well? That you have a good relationship with the students, that you prepare your lessons well, that you motivate your students, or that you are very strict? It all remained rather vague.

Overall

Besides the distinguishable elements and their variation, there are some general findings about induction programs as well. Not only is the use of induction programs the own initiative of schools, they are also developed by the schools themselves. Usually, one experienced teacher receives the responsibility for the organization of the induction program. In some schools these teachers get the opportunity to develop elaborate induction programs in which other experienced teachers participate in the realization of the induction program. In other schools, the teacher responsible for the organization of the induction program also remains solely responsible for its realization. As a consequence, these induction programs have limited content and intensity. The opportunity provided to the responsible teachers to develop an induction program depends on the school's leaders, but also on the responsible teacher. Some of these teachers are strongly motivated to develop an elaborate induction program and claim more resources to realize this, while other mentors just use the time they are given. Though schools themselves develop induction programs, they often use several out-of-school services, such as training for mentors provided at a teacher education institute, or a certain workshop for beginning teachers taught by a hired professional.

A scheme is presented in Table 2.3, providing an overview of what one can expect concretely from a typical low-intensity induction program and a typical high-intensity induction program. Although the degree of intensity is a good 'predictor' for the other characteristics, in practice induction programs can vary. Induction programs with the same degree of intensity may have different characteristics, and characteristics of induction programs with different kinds of intensities sometimes overlap.

Table 2.3 Characteristics of a low-intensity and a high-intensity induction program

	Low-intensity induction program	High-intensity induction program
Intensity	15-25 hours 1 year	60 hours 1 year, plus continuation in the second year if necessary
Facilities	One mentor responsible for the induction program Preparation course for mentors Limited dispensation for teachers: e.g., no obligation to be mentor of a class	Several mentors responsible for the induction program Preparation course for mentors Further professionalization courses for mentors Dispensation for teachers: no obligation to be mentor of a class; no obligation to supervise students during lunch break; no obligation to substitute for absent colleagues One part of a day per week is allocated for induction program-related activities Teachers receive a number of hours for activities related to the induction program (e.g., 25 hours)
Format	Introduction meeting (2 hours) Mentoring, including classroom visits (twice a year) Meetings for beginning teachers in which they can share their-experiences (4 times a year)	Introduction meeting (2 days) Mentoring, including classroom visits and video-taping of lessons (10-20 times a year) Meetings for beginning teachers, including informative presentations, specific training, and opportunity to share experiences (6 times a year) Beginning teachers observing colleagues' lessons Working visit to another school

Content	<p>Emotional support: helping the beginning teacher feel at ease, attention for stress-relief and stimulating self-confidence</p> <p>Practical information: explanation of school rules; introduction to important colleagues</p> <p>Professional development: helping beginning teachers overcome difficulties in classroom management</p>	<p>Emotional support: helping the beginning teacher feel at ease, attention for stress-relief and stimulating self-confidence</p> <p>Practical information: explanation of school rules; introduction of colleagues; notification of relevant upcoming data; preparation of parent-teacher meetings; explanation of computer system in use for calculating grades</p> <p>Professional development: thorough attention for classroom management, pedagogy, and the moral and psychological development of students</p>
Mentor	<p>High degree of trustworthiness</p> <p>Moderate degree of supportiveness</p> <p>Low degree of challenging teachers in their professional development</p>	<p>High degree of trustworthiness</p> <p>High degree of supportiveness</p> <p>High degree of challenging teachers in their professional development</p>

2.4.3 What mentors report on their role as mentor of beginning teachers

The third research question pertains to what mentors report of their ideas and actions concerning their role as mentor of beginning teachers. When asked about their role, we found that mentors mainly focused on guiding the professional development of beginning teachers. Analysis of the selected interview data revealed two interesting themes on which mentors differed: the first theme concerns how mentors tend to guide the professional development of beginning teachers (the mentoring approach), and the second theme concerns what mentors tend to focus on (the mentoring focus). These themes are described and illustrated using quotes from the interviews with mentors.

Mentoring approach

The twelve mentors who participated in our study differed in how they talked about their role. Still, they all shared a similar vision of how beginning teachers should be supported in their professional development. This vision entails that beginning teachers have to learn how to teach by practicing actual teaching and reflecting upon this practice. The role of the mentor here is to guide the reflection process of the beginning teacher.

In the data we found two assumptions underlying this vision. The first assumption is that 'there is no one right way of teaching'. Of course there has to be a learning environment conducive to work, but the way this is attained may differ per teacher. Instead of imposing 'the right way to teach', the goal of the mentor is to find, together with the beginning teacher, the way of teaching that suits the respective teacher best. Consequently, it is not a good idea for the beginning teacher simply to imitate a more experienced teacher. Merely imitating tricks might seem attractive, but if they are not genuinely the teacher's using these tricks does not feel comfortable or right to the teacher, nor is it convincing to the students. In this same line of reasoning, mentors are also not inclined to help beginning teachers by merely giving tips and advice to improve the teaching practice. As one of the mentors said about the role of mentor:

Stimulate him or her to find solutions. Don't give tips, but inspire them to search for 'What suits me?' ... Try different things until you know 'This is my way, this is what I have to do.' And don't just imitate the person next to you.
(Mentor in a moderate-intensity induction program)

The second assumption underlying the vision that mentors ought to mainly stimulate the reflection process instead of helping by giving advice, is that an induction program's ultimate goal is to educate teachers who continue the process of professionalization throughout their careers. After the induction period, teachers have to be able to look at themselves critically. They have to be able to understand causes and consequences of actions, to improve their practice, and, if necessary, be willing to ask for help. Advising beginning teachers might help them to learn to teach well, but would not lead to an ongoing process of professionalization. In order to achieve this latter goal it is important that teachers actually start practicing reflection during their induction period when the mentor is still there to guide the reflection process. By looking for solutions together, asking questions, and thinking together with the teachers, mentors attempt to teach teachers to look at themselves critically so that they can continue doing so once the mentor is no longer there. The following quotes of mentors illustrate this point of view:

If a teacher is not pleased with something, I suppose he would like to do something about it. It is my aim to help the beginning teacher become a little bit independent in this. So that eventually he can see for himself 'What is not going well, and what could I do about it? Why did it go this way?'
(Mentor in a low-intensity induction program)

I think that these meetings and workshops are meant to stimulate the reflection process, to provide a starting point, hoping that people will continue to reflect on their own.
(Mentor in a high-intensity induction program)

All mentors in our study thus believe that the role of the mentor is to stimulate beginning teachers' reflection processes, while avoiding too much input through giving tips or advice. When talking more concretely about how they actually guide beginning teachers, however, mentors appeared to differ in how far they went in stimulating the reflection process and avoiding giving tips and advice. This is shown in the following examples of quotes from mentors:

First I let them talk about their lesson, what they thought of it. How they feel about the lesson. But then, at a certain moment I give them my ideas about the lesson and tell them what I think should be improved. It is difficult for teachers to see what the problem is. It is one big mess.
(Mentor in a low-intensity induction program)

There are teachers of whom I think 'You want to start working with groups already, but you are not even capable yet of making contact with the students individually. How do you want to do this?'. But I do let it happen. Afterwards we analyze 'What is actually going on here?' This step is very essential to me. Because then, at a certain moment, they see it. In general they are very clever boys and girls.
(Mentor in a high-intensity induction program)

Though mentors agree that they ought to stimulate the reflection process of beginning teachers instead of giving advice, the above quotes show that mentors differ in the degree to which they do so. Some mentors tend to steer the beginning teacher in the right direction of thinking fairly soon, while other mentors are more inclined to follow the steps the beginning teacher chooses to take. They keep thinking along with the beginning teacher, asking questions and responding to what he or she thinks, but they have the time and confidence to avoid explicit correcting. They simply wait until the teacher him- or herself sees why something is going wrong and how to correct this.

Mentoring focus

The second theme on which mentors differed consists of the content of their support of the professional development of beginning teachers. In supporting their professional development, most mentors focused strongly on classroom management issues, such as how to get a student to listen to the teacher, how to start a lesson, or how to change from reviewing test results to working on a new subject without creating chaos. One mentor said:

The biggest problem that beginning teachers have is management control. Just problems with management. That is 80%. 'How do I get the students quiet? How do I deal with a bold student?', but also 'How do I deal with a difficult parent?', or problems within the subject department, such as 'I cannot finish the lesson material', 'I have an argument with a colleague'.
(Mentor in a low-intensity induction program)

For beginning teachers, management and organizational issues are often a basic obstacle. Being able to handle such issues is an important condition for teaching a classroom, and it is thus not surprising that these topics receive attention. Most mentors, however, stopped once they saw the teacher running the class smoothly, and felt that he or she could do it on his or her own and did not need the mentor's continuing support. For example, this is shown in the following quote about the intensity of the support that beginning teachers receive:

That differs greatly. When after a class visit you think 'This is running pretty smoothly', then the teacher can manage with group meetings from that point on. If not, you have to see the teacher more often. (Mentor in a low-intensity induction program)

We labeled this kind of mentoring as teacher-centered mentoring. These mentors aim to help beginning teachers with their concerns, which most often revolve around 'surviving the classroom'. As soon as the beginning teachers can survive and feel fairly comfortable, they are left to continue on their own.

A few mentors spoke differently about supporting beginning teachers. These mentors spoke not so much about concerns of the beginning teachers, but about issues that are actually mainly of importance to the students. Instead of being focused on making sure that the beginning teachers were doing well and felt comfortable, these mentors were focused on making sure that the students learned well and felt well in doing so. This led to different topics in their support of the professional development of beginning teachers. Besides classroom management, mentors who were identified as having a student-centered focus paid more attention to pedagogy and the moral and psychological development of students than mentors with a teacher-centered focus. For example, two mentors expressed this as follows:

If two students do not stop talking with each other and disturb the lesson, you can say 'separate them' and perhaps your lesson will become nice and quiet again, but perhaps those students are still not doing anything and thus learning nothing. (Mentor in a high-intensity induction program)

You can go stand on your head and make a joke. Then they will look at you again for a while, but the thing is that you have to motivate them for your subject. That they want to learn something about it. (Mentor in a high-intensity induction program)

2.4.4 The induction program's influence on beginning teachers

The fourth research question referred to the induction program's influence on beginning teachers' teaching practices. Most teachers in our study considered the support of an induction program truly essential for their first year of teaching. They referred most strongly to the influence they felt on their emotional well-being. In the interview data we found various ways in which support from an induction program contributed to teachers' emotional well-being. Several teachers mentioned they gained self-confidence through group meetings in which they could hear about their colleagues' experiences, which were not all that successful either. Teachers felt welcomed and rewarded because of special attention, a welcome dinner or an introduction to the staff. Special meetings for beginning teachers helped them to get to know their colleagues and prevented them from feeling alone. Also, the support of a mentor, or even just knowing that there was someone who they could turn to for help, made teachers feel supported and not alone. The following two quotes of teachers illustrate the induction program's perceived influence on their well-being:

I started with 12 lessons and was sometimes too tired to cycle to the station, just physically exhausted. Those kinds of things she also kept an eye on. And when I said: 'I am dead', she said: 'That is not strange'. Then you can think 'Oh, maybe I am not crazy.' Because when you enter a school and you teach 12 hours and someone else teaches 27 hours and finds it a nice relaxing job, before you know it, you feel inferior and then you need someone to put things into perspective.

The induction program helps you to feel more secure. And also especially to not feel alone. Or that you know that you are not the only one who does not always know what he is doing and cannot figure out what to do about a certain situation. It makes you feel less insecure to know that others are also struggling with the same kinds of things. That is very good.

Remarkable was that, in spite of differences between induction programs, virtually all teachers who had received at least some support from an induction program confirmed that it had a positive influence on their well-being. The results did not show a relationship between the programs' intensity and the perceived influence on the teachers' well-being. The current study thus seems to indicate that an induction program is very important for the well-being of beginning teachers, but, at the same time, only limited intensity is required to realize this.

The induction program's value for teachers' professional development was expressed less strongly, though most teachers were able to report on things they had learned because of the induction program's support. Most often they mentioned how the mentor helped them to critically view themselves and gave them tips to improve their teaching practice. Because of feedback from their mentor or looking at themselves on a video-recording, teachers explained they

were able to see things they had not seen before or started to look at things from a different perspective. In the following quote one teacher explains how a mentor's support made him aware of causes and consequences in his interactions with students:

He videotaped a lesson. Afterward he would select a piece in which he saw something. You did this, and what was the reaction of the class; how could you change that?' And this, in very small steps, makes you aware that if you do something you evoke an immediate reaction. 'If I do this, then that will happen', that is what he made me very aware of.

The tips the teachers received were also mentioned rather often. These tips mainly referred to management and organizational issues. One of the teachers said:

It was great, all the things he saw. The tips he gave. Yes, they were very useful. For example, how to start a lesson: first you stand up, give a short signal, and you do not give in. Do not just say, 'People let's start', and then keep waiting. Your whole attitude has to show you are ready.

Most teachers considered that the added value of the induction program to their professional development was simply to have accelerated it. They learned the tricks that are essential to teach their lessons well quicker than they would have learned on their own. Without the support, they would have gotten there just as well though perhaps a little slower, as is illustrated by the following quote:

Without the support it would have taken me a little longer to make use of certain tricks. For example, walking past the tables backwards when handing out tests. This makes it possible to keep an eye on the persons who just received the test. It is something small that you would not think of yourself so easily, but eventually you would find it out for yourself. It would have taken a little longer, but it would not have been impossible.

In contrast to the above quote, some teachers experienced the induction program's support as truly leading to change. These teachers mostly referred to its influence on their way of reflecting upon their practice, as is shown in the following quote:

Yes, it certainly had an influence. I think that is clear. Because at first I was not really looking at myself at all. Not really. When things went well the students liked me and they got good grades, then all was probably well. But now, when I teach a lesson and the class did not really participate or they did not do well on a test, I think 'How I can do things differently next time?' When students used to get bad grades I would have thought 'The students did not study well'. It is easy to blame the students, but you also have to look at yourself.

Despite the reported learning experiences thanks to the induction program's support, it was remarkable to see how little the program was actually mentioned as an important component in learning how to teach. When the teachers were asked the open question of how one learns to teach, virtually no one explicitly referred to the support received from the induction program. Mostly they mentioned the will to teach, the talent that you either have or do not have, and, above all, the practice of actually teaching. Most teachers find that by teaching they can actually experience the things that go wrong and learn from this. Although support from an induction program is considered important, it is perhaps not felt to be a critical component in the process of learning to become a good teacher.

2.5 Conclusion and discussion

In the current exploratory study we aimed to gain insight into the current state of practice in the Netherlands with regard to the support of beginning teachers with an induction program. To this end, 12 mentors and 22 beginning teachers from 12 different schools were interviewed.

2.5.1 Elements of an induction program

First, we aimed to identify the various elements in which induction programs differ. Five main elements were distinguished, some of which were further subdivided.

The first main element that was distinguished is the induction program's intensity. The intensity consists of the number of hours that are planned for beginning teachers to spend on activities related to the induction program and the period of time during which beginning teachers are supported by the program.

The second main element consists of the facilities that are offered in order to realize the induction program. Facilities include the amount of time allocated for mentors to support and guide beginning teachers, time allocated for preparation and professionalization courses for mentors, time allocated for beginning teachers, dispensation from various tasks for beginning teachers, and synchronization of beginning teachers' time schedules in order to allow for group activities.

The third element is the format that is used to support beginning teachers. Several formats can be used in induction programs, including mentoring, group meetings, observing colleagues while teaching, and specific training.

The fourth element consists of the induction programs' content, referring to the topics that receive attention. Three topics were identified: emotional support, such as helping the beginning

teacher feel at ease, attention for stress-relief and self-confidence; practical information, such as explaining school rules, and notifying beginning teachers of meetings; and professional development, which refers to increasing knowledge and skills that are important for a successful teaching practice through: (1) attention for classroom management, leading students and creating a quiet and organized learning environment; (2) attention for pedagogy, creating a powerful learning environment in which students can develop skills and obtain the required knowledge; and (3) attention for the psychological and moral development of students, creating a safe learning environment, sustaining the social-emotional and moral development of students, and helping students become responsible persons.

The fifth element concerns the mentor. Based on the interviews with teachers, three important characteristics of the mentor were distinguished, namely: the mentor's trustworthiness, referring to his or her ability to create a base of trust that allows the teacher to feel safe and comfortable; the mentor's supportiveness, referring to the degree to which he or she stimulates and motivates the teacher in a positive way; and the mentor's degree of challenge, referring to the degree to which the mentor is able to challenge the beginning teacher in his or her professional development.

2.5.2 Induction programs in the Netherlands

Based on the elements distinguished, we then aimed to answer the second research question: 'How are beginning teachers in the Netherlands supported with an induction program?'

Though induction programs in the Netherlands are not mandatory, we found that many schools do use them to support beginning teachers. Most induction programs in our study were of a low intensity, including about 15 to 25 hours of support for beginning teachers, but we also found schools using induction programs with a moderately high to high intensity, including more than 50 hours of support for each teacher. However, quite frequently teachers received less support than was officially planned for. Sometimes the teachers received fewer hours because they were offered fewer hours than originally planned, but just as often the teachers themselves chose for less support. Remarkable was that in spite of the induction programs' variation in intensity, in general the teachers were happy with the amount of support they received. Teachers who received a great deal of support (high intensity) appreciated the positive impact of this, and teachers who received limited support (low intensity) were happy they had no further 'obligations' that would require extra time.

Whether or not schools offered facilities for mentors and teachers was closely related to the induction program's intensity. In low-intensity induction programs, often one mentor was solely responsible, while in high-intensity induction programs several mentors were generally responsible. In all induction programs beginning teachers received dispensation from several tasks, such as supervising students during lunch break or substituting for colleagues. In most

induction programs with a higher intensity the teachers also received a considerable number of hours intended for induction program-related activities.

Formats that were used in all induction programs were an introduction meeting, individual meetings between mentors and teachers, and group meetings in which beginning teachers could share their experiences. However, the exact content of these commonly used formats differed. For example, in one induction program the introduction meeting was limited to two hours in which beginning teachers were guided through the school and received information about the school rules, while in another program the meeting lasted two days. Besides a school tour and information about school rules, this introduction meeting also included considerable opportunity for the new teachers to meet each other, a workshop about 'how to start the first day at school', and a meeting with the staff. Formats that were used less often were specific training courses and classroom visits by the beginning teachers to enable them to observe and learn from colleagues. These formats were seen most often in the induction programs with a moderately high to high intensity.

Concerning the content of induction programs, we found that in most programs emotional support and practical information received more attention than did professional development. Especially in the induction programs with a low intensity, mentors tended to focus on welcoming the new teachers, making them feel at ease, and trying to include them in the school culture. Classroom management and organization usually received attention as well, but issues concerning the pedagogy and the moral and psychological development of students were not frequently mentioned as subjects that received attention.

With regard to the mentor's role, we found that teachers generally experienced a high degree of trust. Usually the roles of mentor and assessor were strictly separated: mentors supported beginning teachers and the school directorate was responsible for the assessment of teachers. Teachers often referred to this separation, which they experienced as an important condition for trusting their mentor. Many teachers also explicitly appreciated their mentor's supportiveness. The mentor's support, his or her positive attitude and interest, helped beginning teachers not to become stressed, to maintain their confidence and enthusiasm. The ability to challenge the beginning teacher is the only characteristic for which mentors were sometimes criticized. Several mentors were admired for their ability to observe things, ask the right questions, and stimulate reflection, but a few mentors received criticism for being vague or simply not helpful. In the interviews with teachers, the mentor's ability to challenge was spoken of less frequently and seemed less important to the teachers than the mentor's supportiveness.

2.5.3 The role of the mentor

The third research question pertained to the mentors' ideas and actions concerning their role in the induction program. Based on the interviews with mentors, two themes emerged in which mentors differed in their support of beginning teachers' professional development. The first concerns the mentoring approach and how mentors support professional development. Though all mentors shared a rather similar vision of how to support the professional development of beginning teachers, differences became apparent when they were asked more concretely about their approach. All mentors agreed that their role is to guide a beginning teacher's reflection process. A mentor ought to ask questions and reflect upon what the teacher thinks, but should avoid helping beginning teachers by merely giving advice. The first reason we found for this is that a teaching style is considered highly personal and not something to be imposed on the new teacher by a mentor: a beginning teacher should be allowed the space to develop his or her own teaching style. A second reason that was brought up is that an induction program's ultimate goal is to educate teachers who will continue to professionalize throughout their careers. Beginning teachers thus have to learn to look at themselves critically and learn how to change their practice and ask for help if necessary. In the induction period beginning teachers can practice this with the guidance of a mentor, but a mentor's merely giving advice would prevent the beginning teacher from having the opportunity to learn from his or her mistakes. Nevertheless, though mentors agreed that they ought to stimulate the reflection process by asking questions and avoid giving advice, it appeared that mentors differed in the degree to which they actually did so. Some mentors explained that they would first ask the beginning teacher what he or she thought about a certain situation, but would then give their own opinion. In spite of their initial ideas of their role as a mentor, they thus tended to help beginning teachers by giving advice. On the opposite end of the spectrum were mentors who explained they would try to reflect together with the beginning teacher without steering him or her. Even when a teacher would focus on something that, in the mentor's view, he or she was not yet ready for, these mentors encouraged the teacher to continue on this path until he or she would eventually 'get it'.

The second theme in which mentors differed in their support of beginning teachers' professional development concerns their focus. We distinguished a teacher-centered focus versus a student-centered focus. Most mentors tended to focus strongly on the concerns of the teacher. They aimed to help teachers with their problems, which often meant that as soon as the teacher could survive in the classroom and felt comfortable, he or she would receive no further individual support. This finding is in line with Little's (1990) conclusion that mentors often help beginning teachers feel comfortable but offer little professional support to foster a principled understanding of teaching. However, a few mentors were not so much focused on the teacher's concerns, but rather on those of the students, specifically whether they learned well and felt well doing so. This resulted in elaborate support and attention for the professional develop-

ment of beginning teachers; instead of focusing on classroom management, these mentors paid more attention to pedagogy and the students' moral and psychological development. The way mentors look at their role resonates with the concept of 'educative mentoring': mentoring that encourages new teachers to question their practice and to develop strategies to improve or refine it (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b). Mentors in our study found it important to contribute to the professional development of beginning teachers and believed it was best to do so by stimulating the reflection process. However, when speaking more concretely about how they supported beginning teachers' professional development, it seemed that the teaching practice was often less suited to the concept of educative mentoring. First, in spite of their ideas, mentors often tended to give advice and tips rather than encouraging new teachers to question their practice and develop strategies to improve or refine it. Second, though mentors stated that contributing to the professional development of beginning teachers is highly important, the extent to which they actually contributed to it was often limited to the topic of classroom management.

2.5.4 Experienced influence of induction programs

The fourth research question pertained to the induction program's influence on beginning teachers. Most teachers experienced a positive influence on both their well-being and their professional development, though the former more strongly so than the latter. Induction programs contributed to their well-being in several ways. First, induction programs contributed to teachers' socialization process in the school. Because of the introduction meetings, beginning teachers got to know each other from day one. Further group activities made the connection even stronger. By sharing experiences, attending each others' lessons, or working together, teachers established a strong bond with other beginning teachers. The contact with a mentor or mentors also contributed to the socialization process within the school and prevented feelings of isolation. Second, induction programs contributed to a teacher's sense of feeling appreciated. The fact that they received special attention with an induction program, sometimes even including a special welcome dinner or an introduction from the school leaders, made beginning teachers feel important and appreciated. Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington, and Gu (2007) stress the importance of such an effect: it is of huge significance to teachers to be seen and to be appreciated by their directorate and colleagues. Third, induction programs contributed to teachers' confidence levels. Often mentors paid explicit attention to the things that beginning teachers were doing well. Compliments about their qualities contributed to the teachers' self-confidence. Also, teachers who had mentors who were able to put their struggles into perspective or tell of other beginning teachers who experienced similar difficulties, reported increased self-confidence.

In line with findings from several studies (e.g., Chubbuck, Clift, Allard, & Quinlan, 2001;

Helsel DeWert, Babinski, & Jones, 2003; Molner Kelley, 2004), we can conclude that induction programs are important for the well-being of beginning teachers. However, the results of the current study indicate that little is required of an induction program to realize such a positive influence. We did not find a relationship between the intensity of an induction program and its perceived influence on beginning teachers' sense of well-being. Regardless of intensity and content, virtually all beginning teachers supported by an induction program reported a positive influence on their well-being. Perhaps this is not strange; a simple introduction meeting in which beginning teachers meet each other and have the opportunity to get to know each other a little can lead to increased contact between teachers and thereby prevent isolation. Teachers who participate in a meeting for beginning teachers only once can already experience and report the relief of seeing that other beginning teachers struggle just as much. Also the knowledge that someone is there for you when you face a problem can in itself contribute to the feeling of being supported, and one class visit of a mentor and the confirmation that you are doing well can contribute to a beginning teacher's self-confidence.

Most teachers also experienced a positive influence of the induction program on their professional development, though less strongly than the influence on their well-being. The mirroring function was often mentioned: mentors helped beginning teachers to evaluate their own teaching practice. Certain questions or explicit comments from mentors made teachers aware of what was going well and what still needed improvement. Sometimes the mirroring function happened very literally, through videotaping of a teacher's lesson and having him or her review the recording; teachers experienced this as very informative. In relation to the induction program's influence on their professional development, beginning teachers also spoke of the tips their mentors gave them, such as tips on how to start a lesson properly, get students to do their homework, organize work. Though most teachers were able to give examples of situations in which the induction program had contributed to their professional development, this influence was mainly experienced as an acceleration of their professional development, rather than making a real difference. Only on rare occasions did teachers speak of the induction program as making a lasting difference to their professional development. Two teachers believed that because of the induction program's support they became better teachers. One teacher also explained how she really started looking at herself instead of only focusing on the students, for example, when they had not done well on a test.

Despite the examples of specific learning moments, when asked a general question about what were important influences on their way of teaching, virtually no teacher referred to the induction program's influence on 'how one learns to teach'. Most of them were of the opinion that one learns to teach because of the will to teach, a natural talent, and daily practice. However, teachers were happy with the acceleration of their professionalization thanks to the induction program and were generally satisfied with the support they had received.

2.5.5 Discussion

The general picture that arises from the findings of this study is that induction programs in the Netherlands typically seem to be centered around the (individual) teacher: most mentors focus strongly on teachers' concerns and find it extremely important to offer teachers the opportunity to develop their own teaching style. Support from an induction program mostly focuses on the teacher's questions, well-being, and personal development. This is markedly different from support by programs in, for example, France, Shanghai, and Japan, where induction is much more directive (Britton et al., 2003).

Induction programs in the Netherlands seem to focus on providing emotional support and practical information. Professional development receives only limited support, which concurs with the literature on induction programs' content in the USA (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Little, 1990; Wang and Odell, 2002). The results of the present study concerning the induction programs' influence on teachers are in line with these findings: in general, teachers experienced an important influence on their well-being and much less influence on their professional development. At the same time, they did not express disappointment in or dissatisfaction with the content of the induction program or its mostly limited effect on their professional development. Though teachers sometimes criticized components of the program, they were generally satisfied with the support and the extra attention they received. Partly this may be explained by low expectations on the part of the teachers, but even more so by the fact that induction programs are so strongly focused on the concerns and questions of the teachers: teachers do not miss the fact that no extra attention is paid to pedagogy or the moral and psychological development of students because this is not (yet) their concern.

It is not clear why most mentors in our study paid only limited attention to the concerns of students. While available time may be an important condition it is doubtful that more time would automatically lead to more attention for issues that matter especially to the students, since we did not find mentors expressing a wish for more time or complaining of a lack of opportunity to pay more attention to other subjects. Perhaps mentors are aware of students' concerns, but do not consider these an important factor for an induction program and therefore deliberately focus on teachers' concerns. Another possibility is that it is difficult for mentors to pay attention to the concerns of students. Fuller (1969) already described that, in general, beginning teachers are focused first on surviving in the classroom and only later start to focus on student learning. It seems that for mentors, as well as for beginning teachers, it is not easy to look beyond this first concern of survival. It is widely acknowledged that mentoring is not an easy job and requires serious preparation and professionalization (e.g., Athanases et al., 2008; Feiman-Nemser, 2001b; Orland, 2001). We would like to suggest that attention for students' concerns be made a core topic in the preparation and professionalization process of mentors.

Our finding that professional development receives only limited attention is in line with criticism expressed throughout the years that professional development receives too little attention (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver, & Yusko, 1998; Wang & Odell, 2002). Nevertheless, we see evidence of a positive development. Though the topics of mentoring and support for beginning teachers in induction programs have been discussed in the literature since the eighties, it took considerable time for them to become commonly used in schools. Most schools in this study have not been using induction programs very long, and some programs were still in development.

A limitation of the current study pertains to its rather small scale. An advantage of the method used is that we were able to go more into depth than would have been possible using a large-scale study. However, a disadvantage pertains to the external validity of the study. Though the current study provided further insight into the way beginning teachers in the Netherlands are supported with an induction program and revealed interesting information regarding the variations between induction programs and mentors, a large-scale study would be desirable to show whether the current conclusions would be confirmed.

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