



## Expectations to mentoring as support for professional development

Ingrid Helleve, Marit Ulvik and Dag Roness

### ABSTRACT

Mentoring is acknowledged as a means to support professional development for teachers. However, mentoring has multiple meanings and may be practiced as supervision, support or collaborative self-development for new as well as experienced teachers. The aim of this Norwegian study is to get an understanding of what expectations newly-qualified teachers, their mentors and their leaders have to mentoring and professional development and thereby to identify what kind of mentoring is needed. Data is collected through questionnaires and focus group conversations. The result shows a discrepancy between school leaders' expectations on one hand and those of mentors' and newly qualified teachers' on the other. While school leaders call for supervision and for teachers' opportunities to join external courses, mentors and newly-qualified teachers ask for mentoring rooted in classroom-activities. One implication of the study is to introduce an induction period for novice teachers where they are gradually included in the organization. Another implication is to use educated mentors as resources for school development, not only for newly-qualified, but also for experienced teachers. Implications for politicians are to provide resources and for school leaders to provide space and protected time for mentoring and professional learning at all levels to ensure sustained school development.

**Keywords:** *mentoring, professional development, newly qualified teachers, mentors, school leaders*

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### SAMMENDRAG

#### *Forventninger til veiledning som støtte for profesjonell utvikling*

Veiledning er anerkjent som et virkemiddel for å støtte profesjonell utvikling for lærere. Men begrepet veiledning åpner for mange tolkningsmuligheter og kan bli praktisert som supervisjon, individuell støtte eller kollektiv veiledning for nye så vel som erfarne lærere.

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Målet med denne norske studien er å forstå hvilke forventninger nyutdannede og erfarne lærere samt skoleledere har til veiledning og profesjonell utvikling for derigjennom å identifisere hvilke behov de ser for veiledning. Data er innsamlet gjennom spørreskjemaer, og fokus-gruppesamtaler. Resultatene viser et skille mellom skoleledere på den ene siden og veiledere og nyutdannede lærere på den andre. Mens skolelederne fokuserer på supervisjon og på læreres muligheter til å delta på eksterne kurs, er veiledere og nyutdannede lærere opptatt av at aktiviteter som støtter profesjonell utvikling må være forankret i klasserommet. Implikasjoner av studien er å innføre en induksjonsperiode for nye lærere der de gradvis blir innlemmet i organisasjonen. En annen implikasjon er at utdannede veiledere må brukes som ressurser for skoleutvikling både med tanke på nye, men også erfarne læreres profesjonelle utvikling. Implikasjoner for politikere bør være å sørge for ressurser og for skoleledere å sørge for beskyttet tid til veiledning og profesjonell utvikling på alle nivåer for å sørge for vedvarende skoleutvikling.

**Nøkkelord:** *veiledning, profesjonell utvikling, nyutdannede lærere, veiledere, skole-leder*

## Introduction

Mentoring is recognized as a means to support professional development (Aspfors & Bondas, 2012). However, mentoring has multiple meanings and may be practiced as supervision, support or collaborative self-development for new as well as experienced teachers (Kemmis Heikkinen, Fransson, Aspfors, & Edwards-Groves, 2014). In this article, we focus on professional development aiming to understand what expectations newly qualified teachers, their mentors and their leaders have to mentoring and professional development. Professional development may embrace different connotations and expectations depending on the perspective you have as a school leader, mentor or newly-qualified teacher. However, as pointed out by Hargreaves and Goodson (2006), professional development should be a combination of top-down and bottom-up decisions in the school organization based on the fact that the respective representatives know each other's perspectives. There may be a tension between a top-down and a bottom-up approach; consequently, the two should be balanced. However, internationally, the last years have been characterized by an educational top-down policy that can be described as an epidemic of changes (Priestley, Edwards & Priestley, 2012). As they continue their careers, teachers experience an increasing workload based on demands for test results, paper-work and bureaucracy (Ball, 2008; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006; Helleve, Ulvik & Smith, 2018).

We were curious to understand what expectations the different professional groups in schools have to professional development. We decided to design a study with the following two research questions:

*What expectations do newly-qualified teachers, mentors and school leaders in secondary school have to mentoring and professional development in schools?*

*What are the main similarities and differences between the three groups' expectations?*

## Professional development

Teachers' professional development is an elusive term. It may conjure images of short-term courses and workshops, as well as ongoing learning and reflective practice (Helleve, 2010). According to Darling-Hammond (1994), teachers' professional development is a process of enhancing teachers' status through increased awareness and an expanding knowledge base. Evans (2002) defines teachers' professional development as follows:

... an ideologically-, attitudinally-, intellectually- and epistemologically based stance on the part of an individual, in relation to the practice of the profession to which s/he belongs, and which influences her/his professional practice. (Evans, 2002, p. 130)

Like Darling-Hammond, she is concerned with the fact that teachers' professional development is an ongoing process. Kelly (2006) argues that so far teachers' professional development has been defined through a cognitive perspective on learning. If knowledge and teachers' expertise reside inside the head of the individual and knowledge is transferable, then courses outside schools are the correct way of enhancing *teachers' professional development*. Knowledge learned in de-contextualized situations can be transferred to the teacher's classroom. Courses and learning programs outside school have been regarded by policymakers as a support for teachers' professional development (Loughran, 2014).

Bell and Gilbert (1994) also argue for the term teacher's *learning* as an alternative to development. *Development* reflects a passive attitude from the teacher, as if somebody else has to take responsibility for the process. Avalos (2011) is concerned with the difference between teacher development and teacher learning:

... at the core of such endeavours is the understanding that professional development is about teachers' learning, learning how to learn, and transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of students' growth. (Avalos, 2011, p. 10)

A prevailing perception is that professional development revolves around doing things *to* teachers rather than *with* teachers (Loughran, 2014, p. 271). We agree with the arguments for using teachers' learning to illustrate that teachers themselves have to be involved in the process. However, teacher professional development is a long-established expression. In this article, we use professional learning and professional development as equivalent expressions, following Smith's (2003) definition:

Professional development means becoming the best professional one can possibly be (adapted quote from Underhill, 1986). There is no fixed route to be followed in professional development, nor is there an end to the development as long as people work in the profession (p. 203).

In order to support the development described above, Smith (2018) argues that a mentor's most important task is to be a dialogue partner who is able to listen, but also to contribute with knowledge and experience. In this article, we also argue for the fact that experienced teachers need support in the continuing learning process of professional development.

### **Mentoring as support for professional development**

A mentor is an experienced and qualified colleague who contributes to newly-qualified teachers' professional development and learning (Smith, 2018). We argue for the fact that mentoring also can be a support for experienced teachers' professional development. According to Lauvås and Handal (2000, p. 34), peer mentoring is one of the most important prerequisites for professional development in schools. Based on a situated perspective on learning, they argue for collective reflective processes where new knowledge is developed. Shared meaning creates a foundation for co-operation and collaboration (Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä, 2008; Helleve & Ulvik, 2013; Lauvås & Handal, 2000, p. 277). Lauvås, Lycke and Handal (1996, p. 17) argue that peer mentoring makes it possible to break old patterns and support professional learning for newly-qualified as well as experienced teachers. A number of studies show that peer mentoring can be an alternative means for supporting teachers' professional development (Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä, 2012, p. 15). There is a growing understanding that mentoring is not only a concern for newly-qualified, but also for experienced teachers (Helleve, 2017). Smith (2018) argues that mentoring is necessary throughout teachers' careers and among leaders (p. 25). Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) claim that mentoring needs to be transformed from something that is arranged for students and novice teachers to an integral part of school culture, in order to form strong relationships between experienced and newly-qualified colleagues (Wang, Odell & Schwille, 2008, p. 146).

After finishing teacher education teachers receive little or no feedback on their practice, and make changes mainly through trial and error (Beijard, Korthagen & Verloop, 2007; Hargreaves 2000; Throndsen, Carlsson, & Bjørnsson, 2019). Kelly (2006, p. 519) argues that the most important influence factors in the process of teacher learning or knowing-in-practice are the ways in which the working practice of the school engages them to think.

### **Professional development from a political perspective**

The importance of continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers in order to improve or change their teaching practice is widely acknowledged (Edwards, 2012; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006; OECD 2014, 2019). How to support professional development is frequently discussed (Kelchtermans, 2004). A meta-study by van Driel, Meirink and Zwart (2012) shows that the aim of most programs for professional development across several countries seem to be coherent with district,

state and/or national policies, which again means that professional development is not always in line with the ideas or desires of schools and teachers themselves. Most programs seem to support implementation of the latest political initiatives (Biesta, Priestly & Robinson, 2015). According to the Teaching and Learning International Survey (OECD, 2014), professional development refers to activities that aim to advance teachers' skills and knowledge, with the ultimate aim of improving their teaching practice:

This definition recognizes that development can be provided in many ways, ranging from the most formal (such as courses or workshops) to more informal approaches (such as collaboration with other teachers or participation in extracurricular activities). Professional development can be provided through external expertise in the form of courses, workshops or formal qualification programmes or through collaboration between schools or teachers across schools (in the form of observational visits to other schools) or within schools where teachers work. Professional development within schools can be provided through coaching or mentoring, collaborative planning and teaching and sharing good practices (p. 86).

The report accentuates three elements concerning professional development. These are induction, mentoring and continuous professional development. TALIS defines induction programs for teachers as “a range of structured activities at a school to support teachers' introduction into the school”(OECD, p. 88). Mentoring activities are explained as “a support structure in schools where more-experienced teachers support less-experienced teachers”(OECD, p. 89). The report recommends induction and mentoring programs as important for teachers' future professional development.

Another more recent report (OECD, 2018) repeats that the benefits for professional development depend on the quality of the programs. However, the report continues:

... interest is also growing in approaches to encourage more informal ways of learning among staff through reflection, joint problem-solving and networking and sharing of expertise and experience (p. 1).

The importance of teachers' informal learning processes is in line with other research studies (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006).

## **Professional development and mentoring in the Norwegian context**

According to TALIS (OECD, 2014), Norwegian teachers spend less time on competence development than other OECD countries. Concerning professional development for teachers, TALIS focuses on induction programs for newly-qualified teachers, mentoring and continuous professional development for teachers. Norway has no formal

induction program for newly-qualified teachers. Since 1997, different models of supporting novice teachers have been tried. White Paper 11 (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2009) concluded that experiences from mentoring arrangements were solid and should be offered to all newly-qualified teachers, however on a voluntary basis. An evaluation conducted on contract from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (RAMBØLL, 2016) showed that only six out of ten newly-qualified teachers received any kind of support in their transition from pre-service to in-service teaching, and that the frequency and content of mentoring varied from school to school. In 2018, a national framework was initiated by the Government (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2018). The document is a strong recommendation to school owners and schools to ensure mentoring for newly-qualified teachers. According to the plan, newly-qualified teachers should be included and acknowledged as resources and contributors in the professional community. Furthermore, mentoring should be linked to the school's competence plans. Mentoring should be conducted by educated mentors and not by formal leaders, and activities concerning newly-qualified teachers should not be isolated from other professional development activities in schools. However, TALIS 2018 shows that what is the most alarming concern for Norwegian educational policy is lack of support and mentoring for newly-educated teachers (Thronsen et. al, 2019).

The report from RAMBØLL also underlines that mentors primarily should be formally educated. For many years, experienced teachers in Norway have had the possibility to become educated mentors through formal education. Since 2007, almost all teacher education institutions in Norway have offered some kind of mentor studies (Krokmark & Åberg, 2007). As pointed out by Day (2007), teachers need support in their professional development throughout their careers. According to the framework made by the Ministry of Education and Research, educated mentors should be able to reflect on mentoring as a contribution to innovation and development in kindergartens and schools (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2010, p. 4; Ulvik & Sunde, 2013). The local teacher education institution referred to in this paper has offered mentor education in two modules that equal 15 ECTS each since 2006. The first module is directed towards mentoring student teachers and the second towards mentoring newly-qualified teachers as well as experienced teachers (Helleve, 2018). The majority of the mentors in the current study have this background.

## Data

Data were collected through two sources: questionnaires and focus group conversations.

## Context and selection

Every autumn, for the last four years, the local teacher education institution in collaboration with the school administration in the county has arranged a two-day seminar for novice teachers from upper secondary schools, their mentors and school leaders. The seminar is one of very few meeting points for these three groups. In

practice, few mentors attend the seminar, while all the schools are always represented by school leaders. The aim is to focus on mentoring and professional development for newly-qualified teachers. The seminar is a combination of lectures, group discussions and peer-group mentoring.

### Questionnaires: sample, data collection and data analysis

In autumn 2018, a total of 47 newly-qualified teachers, seven mentors and 15 school leaders participated in the annual seminar. As part of the program, questionnaires were handed out during the first day of the seminar. After the group session on the second day, we asked the participants to hand in their questionnaires in a box. Participation was voluntary. Due to anonymity, the researchers did not keep track of who was handing in which questionnaire.

In the questionnaire, all the respondents were asked about four themes: their motivation for teaching, their experiences from their first period as teachers, their expectations to mentoring and to professional development in their schools. All the questions were open-ended. For the purpose of the current study, we focused on expectations to mentoring and professional development. Altogether, 32 newly-qualified teachers, five mentors and 14 school leaders handed in the questionnaire. The group defined as school leaders consisted of 10 principals and four heads of department. Upper secondary schools are divided into several departments depending on subjects and programs. A head of department works in the leader group alongside the principal. Five of the school leaders also act as mentors for newly-qualified teachers. The reason why few mentors came to the seminar may be that in some schools the head of department acts as a mentor while he or she is also the novice teacher's leader. However, we saw from the questionnaires that they respond as school leaders. Instead of appointing a colleague as a mentor, a head of department is given the responsibility as part of her or his job as a school leader.

We did not use a predetermined system of codes and categories for the analysis but conducted an inductive and data-driven thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The three authors first interpreted the qualitative statements individually. Each author selected crucial themes, that is to say, themes that refer to mentoring and professional development. The themes were compared and discussed in a moderation process. There was a high level of reciprocal understanding. With minor adjustments, the authors arrived at the themes for the open-ended questions as presented in the findings under the headlines: "Newly-qualified teachers' expectations to mentoring and professional development" and "Mentors expectations to mentoring and professional development".

### Follow-up through focus group conversations

Having read the answers collected from the questionnaires, we acknowledged that we wanted a deeper understanding of newly-qualified teachers' and mentors' expectations to professional development. Therefore, the second source of data was from focus

groups, with one group of educated mentors and two groups of newly-qualified teachers. In line with Kitzinger and Barbour (2001), we saw the importance of bringing together people who shared the same experiences. Another issue is that when the participants know each other and feel confident, it may be easier to exchange ideas.

The group of mentors was selected from an upper secondary school with many formally-educated mentors. Six mentors agreed to participate in the focus group. Their time of service in school varied from 12 to 21 years. The groups of novice teachers were selected from a new upper secondary school with many newly-qualified teachers. Altogether, five teachers agreed to participate. One teacher had one year's experience, another had two years' and the three others had just started their third year. It turned out to be difficult to gather all the five teachers at the same time and consequently, two focus group conversations were conducted.

Each conversation lasted for approximately one hour, situated in seminar rooms in the teachers' respective schools. Focus groups may yield more than the sum of the individuals' points of view. The method is well suited to explore the respondents' experiences, attitudes and beliefs (Kitzinger & Barbour, 2001). Brinkmann (2007) argues for the concept focus-group conversations instead of interviews. The reason is that the participants are engaged in dialectically examining the topic. In line with Kitzinger and Barbour (2001), no specific interview guide was developed. The discussion centered around experiences and expectations to mentoring and professional development. The conversations were transcribed and analysed in the same way as the questionnaires. We found that the focus groups elaborated on the points from the questionnaires. In the findings section, the results from the two data sources are presented separately.

### Ethical considerations

The groups consisting of mentors and school leaders were small. Consequently, their anonymity might be challenged. This might have consequences for the quality of the data, because the respondents may have wished to answer in ways they knew would please the researchers. However, there are no such indicators in the data.

## Findings

Analysis of the questionnaires showed a division in the material between what we have chosen to call *general statements* and *concrete wishes* concerning professional development in school. Concrete wishes refer to specific activities. General statements are more abstract.

### Newly-qualified teachers' expectations to mentoring and professional development

In the questionnaires, novice teachers are more concrete in their approach than mentors and school leaders. Two expectations are defined as general statements: First,



one teacher who says that it should be possible to start with a permanent job and not as a substitute teacher. According to him, teachers who are listened to are old and experienced. Another teacher states that the whole organization should participate in competence development.

Organized mentoring arrangements (induction) for novice teachers are suggested as concrete wishes for professional development for teachers:

“I wish there was collaboration between newly-qualified teachers, mentors and the administration when it comes to arrangements for novice teachers”. An appointed mentor is also important. One teacher says: “I expect to have the possibility to speak regularly with a more-experienced teacher concerning problems I feel I need help to solve”. According to the newly-qualified teacher, there should also be arrangements from the beginning to make sure that newly-qualified teachers have the information they need. One teacher suggests a course for newly-qualified teachers concerning, for example, how to make plans for a semester and for the whole year. Another teacher points to all the written and unwritten rules that exist in a school, and how many questions a newly-qualified teacher has in the beginning, concerning everything from details to totality. Many responses to the questionnaire combine expectations to group mentoring for all teachers:

I wish there was time for visiting each other's classrooms so I could get feedback on my own way of teaching. I would also like to have the opportunity to visit others' classrooms and observe their ways of teaching.

Systematic and organized possibilities for observation for all teachers seem to be important for collaborative reflection. Action research is also mentioned as a way of learning together. Teamwork and collaboration across subjects are other expectations to professional development. One of the teachers claim that teamwork should be organized by the administration and arranged within the same subject group, as well as across subjects. Class management and assessment seem to be important topics.

In the focus groups, the novice teachers ask for many of the same elements for promotion of professional development as suggested in the questionnaire. First, they miss an induction period:

As a newly qualified teacher, you enter the new workplace and are supposed to act as a teacher. Nobody is following you up over time or enters your classroom in order to see if you are able to do what you are supposed to do. There is no starting period.

One teacher claims: You have to find out almost everything concerning what are ordinary rules and behavior among students and teachers. Another teacher said that he had to nag other teachers:

It is difficult to nag about everything. How to log on to It's Learning (Learning management system) for example. I remember one of the first days I was

working on a blank Word document, hoping nobody was watching my screen, because I had no idea what a yearly report was. I thought I would google it when nobody was watching me. It stressed me a lot. Subject reports were supposed to be delivered, but what was actually a subject report?

Most of the teachers in the group did not have an appointed mentor. The result was that they had to ask other teachers and, at the same time, felt that they were bothering them. Often they asked the person sitting next to them in the teachers' office, but they also tried to ask various teachers in order to avoid asking the same one all the time. Colleagues are described as nice and obliging, but the school culture is not interpreted as a sharing culture. Consequently, the new teachers feel they are nagging their colleagues. What they ask for is an appointed mentor:

If you are a fresh teacher coming directly from teacher education, then it is important to have a mentor at school. Then you know he is paid for answering questions, so you know you aren't bothering him. You have so many questions. To know everything immediately is overwhelming ... so it is good to know that there is one person you can go to without a bad conscience.

The school is trying to implement classroom observation as support for professional development. So far, they have only practiced this activity once, but the newly qualified teachers hope for, and look forward to, new possibilities during the rest of the semester. However, not all teachers were motivated for peer mentoring. One of the newly-qualified teachers describes the visit from an experienced teacher as a peer observer in his classroom:

I had one of the most-experienced teachers in the whole school. He said that we were going to take over and he would soon be finished. He didn't care much for the observation project. So it came to nothing. Anyway, I observed him and that was a good experience.

Apparently, some of the experienced teachers have lost their motivation for teaching. However, this does not seem to influence the newly-qualified teachers' belief in observation as a support for professional development. One of the teachers says that what he appreciates most as support for professional development is to receive concrete feedback. Another teacher says that professional development becomes less meaningful the further the activity is moved away from the classroom. External courses are judged as an extra burden and not as support for professional development:

It is better to be inside the classroom and observe and create a space for reflection there, instead of being served facts. I think that if I joined a formal course, I would learn about even more facts that I would never have time to develop.

The teacher says that she has received emails concerning courses and post-graduate education, but for her it has been more than enough to keep her head above the water and do what she had to do in her classroom. Plenary sessions and information meetings may also be wasted time.

The school culture is described as fragmented, with no culture for sharing. The tension between teachers' autonomy and goal-oriented management is underlined. School leaders are described as "schizophrenic": It is like we are being told not to stress before the exam. The students should take it easy and slow down. And then in August the results are announced and we are told that this is not good enough. Teachers are told to promote the ideal of "Bildung" (human development) among their students and, at the same time, to produce good results on tests and exams.

### Mentors' expectations to mentoring and professional development

In the questionnaire, mentors' expectations to mentoring and professional development are mainly concrete wishes. General statements mentioned are that school leaders and teachers should collaborate more on school development. Another statement is to clarify the roles and expectations between mentors and heads of departments. When it comes to concrete wishes, four mentors suggest organized routines for mentoring as important for newly-qualified teachers. Time for mentoring is specifically underlined:

My expectation is that the leadership organizes time for mentoring for me and the newly qualified teachers. I also expect that mentoring is rooted in the leadership and that mentoring is professionally run by educated mentors as part of the school's development plan.

Another mentor is also concerned with the possibilities for teachers to join mentor education. The sentence "I WISH TO HAVE BETTER POSSIBILITIES FOR JOINING MENTOR EDUCATION" is written in capital letters on one of the questionnaires. Further, mentoring for experienced teachers is emphasized as a support for professional development. According to the mentors, mentoring should be part of the schools' routines and part of the schedule for the whole year.

In the focus group conversations, the mentors also refer to previous experiences that have been important for promotion of professional development. First, they refer to the period when the school was new, approximately ten years ago. Everything had to be organized. They claim it was a time full of frustrations and challenges because there were no routines. Apparently, the sense of togetherness was important: "It sounds dramatic, but it was frustrating, and I remember I was crying. However, it was good because we had each other, and we were developing". The fact that everybody was new and had to collaborate very closely was motivating. The mentors remember this period as an important stage in their professional development

because their motivation influenced their good relations to the pupils. It was a hard and busy period, but “we did it together”.

The next stage promoting professional development was when they were educated as mentors. They became more conscious concerning their own role as teachers and mentors, but they also saw their own school as an organization from a new perspective. The third stage was a project within their school, which lasted for six months in 2010. During this period, teachers and leadership in collaboration with a teacher educator decided that they wanted the educated mentors to be leaders of their colleagues’ professional development processes. Based on requests from their colleagues, the mentors decided to arrange for peer group mentoring and classroom observation. After the project was finished, they claim that their competence has not been used. Occasionally, they mentor student teachers and newly-qualified teachers, but other teachers or head of departments may also take the responsibility for mentoring activities. The time since the project was finished has been a period where the sense of professional development has decreased:

Something has happened. We are mainly the same group of people, but we collaborate much less, and I feel like I am working inside my own bubble. My colleagues contributed to my professional development. Collaboration is less structured now and I think that’s the reason why it has changed.

Collaborative mentoring activities seem to be most important for professional development in schools. However, the group agrees that something has happened when it comes to collaboration and motivation for teaching:

I have reflected on the question of why my motivation has decreased. You are always supposed to develop. I do my best and am satisfied and still there are new demands from the authorities; new signs telling you that you are not good enough. We are never good enough and then my motivation disappears.

This mentor is not the only one who mentions demands from the authorities as a means of reducing motivation. During the five days marked for professional development, the teachers are not allowed to work on their own plans and evaluation of teaching:

I am sure it is decided from the political authorities and the leadership in this building. It is a paradox that they expect a lot of exciting things to happen in my classroom, but I am not allowed to sit down with the other teachers and have the possibility to collaborate on it. I feel like we talk about different worlds; the world I live in and the world the school leader and the local authorities live in are different planets.

Apparently, the expectations of how the days meant for professional development should be spent are very different. The mentor group also agrees that an important condition for professional development is the possibility to be creative:

At least, you must have enough space so that you can be creative and plan things that have not been planned by anybody else beforehand. If everything is chewed and mixed and planned by others there are no possibilities for creativity or freedom.

Another mentor says that development has to come from inside. Professional development is linked to self-confidence. She says that if you are uncertain and afraid of doing anything wrong then your development stops.

### School leaders' expectations to mentoring and professional development

In the questionnaires, school leaders are mainly concerned with general statements and less with concrete wishes. Some mention the importance of a confident school culture where everybody is concerned with school development:

I want a school where everybody is concerned with development and where the distance between newly-qualified teachers, experienced teachers and leadership is so small that everybody, not least the newcomers, is taken care of and stimulated.

Open doors, good information and open-minded colleagues are considered to be important: "I want to include newly-qualified teachers in the same nice way I was met when I was new as a teacher. Open doors, good information, open colleagues who can help. Some mention collaboration as a vision for support of professional development. They state that collaboration should be binding for everybody inside the organization: "Collaboration must be just as important for leaders, teachers and pupils, and contribute to quality in education, learning within the organization and development of the profession inside the school". A concern among the school leaders is lack of time for pedagogical leadership:

We need more time for leadership and collaboration. Administrative tasks take too much time, and too much time spent on control means that tasks that need attention over time become fragmented and are given less priority.

Another school leader is concerned with the new national curriculum reform in 2020. She considers the implementation of the reform as a good opportunity for working systematically with professional development for the teachers.

The school leaders also mention some concrete wishes. Possibilities for teachers to join courses and post-graduate education outside their school are frequently mentioned. Performance interviews are said to be a good arena for discussion. School

leaders' opportunities to visit teachers in their classrooms and mentor their teaching is also pointed out as an important way of supporting teachers' professional development. One leader says: "Those who are heads of departments should also practice classroom-observation where pupils are supposed to observe and give feed-back". Another principal says that their school has hired an external consultant to help them with the school development process.

## Discussion

The aim of the present study is to understand what expectations different groups of employees inside schools have towards professional development and mentoring in their own organization. The results show a difference in approach when it comes to expectations of professional development and mentoring.

The newly-qualified teachers' expectations are linked to an understanding of the school as a learning community. However, they clearly see how the start of a teacher's career should provide a solid foundation for further professional development. An induction period and possibilities for a mentor and regular mentoring activities as a prerequisite for newly-qualified teachers is well documented (Ulvik, Smith & Helleve, 2009). In addition to an appointed mentor, the novice teachers mention different activities like, for example, possibilities for classroom observation. According to Hobson, Ashby, Malderez and Tomlinson (2009), numerous studies have found that one of the most-valued aspects of the work carried out by mentors is lesson observation when this is done while observing certain criteria; first, that the observation is conducted in a sensitive, non-threatening way; second, that focus is on specific aspects of the observed teacher's teaching; and third, that it provides an opportunity for genuine and constructive dialogue between mentor and mentee. The fourth point is that effective mentors ensure that their mentees are sufficiently challenged. Consequently, classroom observations should be included as an activity for non-hierarchical peer-group mentoring, preferably organized by an educated mentor since mentoring is different from teaching (Heikkinen et al., 2012).

In line with the mentors, newly-qualified teachers are concerned with development through a learning community for teachers independent of their length of experience.

What mentors ask for are structures, autonomy and possibilities for collaboration and peer mentoring for all the teachers in the school. Other studies show that peer mentoring can be an alternative means for supporting teachers' professional development (Heikkinen et al., 2012). The term *peer* refers to a mentor with a comparable level as the person being tutored. Newly-qualified teachers have many concrete wishes related to mentoring as "first aid" for new teachers, but also for experienced teachers' professional development. One of their wishes is to avoid ad hoc courses imposed by others.

Mentors and newly-qualified teachers in this study seem to agree with Avalos (2011), who describes professional development as "teachers' learning through transformation to a practice to the best for their students' growth" (p.10). Mentors'

expectations are connected to creativity and motivation and to classroom activities. In line with Wilson, Rozelle and Mieska (2011), mentors tend to understand teacher professional development as allowing teachers to repeatedly try new strategies and to reflect on what works. Possibilities for peer mentoring are important for experienced teachers as well as novices and are anchored in possibilities for creating learning communities (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). The mentor group is specifically concerned with the new competences they have developed through mentor education. Their arguments also correspond to other research (Smith, Ulvik & Helleve, 2013), which shows that educated mentors are able to see their schools as organizations from a new perspective and to participate in making plans for how to support their colleagues' professional development in the best possible ways. The mentors want to collaborate with their school leaders on how to prepare good ways of organizing mentor routines. The focus group has even had the opportunity to practice this kind of organizing through a mentoring project in their own school and judge that period as an experience that contributed to professional development (Helleve, 2017). Now they are frustrated because their competence is not being used. The mentors in this study refer to the latest years as a period of decreased motivation. They have few possibilities to use their creativity, which is regarded as a condition for professional development, or the competence they have gained through mentor education. They also ask for a clarification of the role as formally-educated mentor and head of department when it comes to responsibility for mentoring processes. Demands from school leaders and political authorities have increased and make them feel insufficient (Ball, 2008; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006).

Many of the school leaders express their expectations to professional development in what we have chosen to call general statements, which means that they are ambiguous and have few concrete wishes. Concrete wishes are external courses and possibilities for post-graduate education, and so is the possibility for heads of departments to visit classrooms. Classroom observation is mentioned as a possibility for school leaders to increase awareness of how teachers are teaching, not as peer mentoring as mentioned by the mentors, but more like supervision, understood as instruction and being told how to act (Smith, 2018, p. 31). The role of mentor and the role of school leader are different when it comes to mentoring. According to the Ministry of Education and Research (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2018, p. 7), mentoring should be conducted by a mentor and not a formal leader. TALIS 2018 shows that Norwegian school leaders report that what they particularly need to improve is their competence in giving feedback to classroom observation (Throndsen et al., 2019).

## Conclusion and implications

This study raises important issues concerning mentoring as support for teacher professional development in schools. School leaders' expectations to professional development seem to be based on a cognitive understanding of learning and a top-down

approach to teachers' learning (Kelly, 2006). What the leaders call for are teachers' possibilities to take post-graduate education, join external courses and be supervised. Mentors and newly-qualified teachers, on the other hand, argue for a situated perspective on learning and development. Mentoring activities should be rooted in their classroom practice and reflected upon as part of their school's established routines for mentoring activities. What happens seems to be the opposite. Findings from this study show that teachers experience losing their motivation due, for example, to demands from the authorities.

This study shows that newly-qualified teachers and mentors ask for mentoring as an important prerequisite for professional development for teachers. At present, Norwegian local authorities and schools are encouraged to introduce mentoring, but there is no obligation to do it. Further, the study shows that it may be necessary to clarify responsibilities connected to the role as head of department and the role as mentor. Formally-educated mentors are resources for school development, not only for the newly qualified, but also for experienced teachers. Smith (2015) claims that the practice of mentoring as carried out in Norway, "is in the process of establishing itself as a distinct profession within the teaching profession" (p. 295). However, Smith continues, such a view places heavy responsibility on various stakeholders: politicians to provide resources and school leaders to provide space and protected time for professional learning at all levels to ensure sustained school development.

A strong wish from the newly-qualified teachers is to enter an induction period where they are gradually introduced to the profession and not abruptly given full responsibility. Still another implication may be to listen to newly-qualified teachers and mentors concerning how the limited time for professional development should be used. Both groups agree that activities that are not directly linked to their own practice are not well suited for professional development. In line with Hargreaves and Goodson (2006), we think that decisions concerning professional development activities should be based on bottom-up as well as top-down decisions. Leaders should make their decisions rooted in a dialogue with mentors and teachers.

The findings of this study show a discrepancy between school leaders' expectations on one hand and those of mentors' and newly-qualified teachers' on the other. These results should be followed up in a bigger study with the same focus but within larger groups of professionals.

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