



What Matters in Mentoring?

A report exploring the most successful conditions for teacher mentoring in NYC schools

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Executive Summary

What Matters Most for Mentoring in NYC Schools?

In 2014, the NYC Department of Education Office of Leadership’s Mentoring Division commissioned a report to learn what conditions would lead to the best outcomes for mentoring in NYC schools. Researchers surveyed a subset of new teachers, mentors and principals using randomized sampling and found four conditions that seemed to matter most¹:

- 1) *Strong links between mentoring work and other school learning activities*
- 2) *At least one hour of interaction time between mentors and new teachers*
- 3) *Mentors with at least five years of experience*
- 4) *Completion of the DOE Mentor Certification Professional Development Program*

1) Strong links between mentoring work and other school learning activities

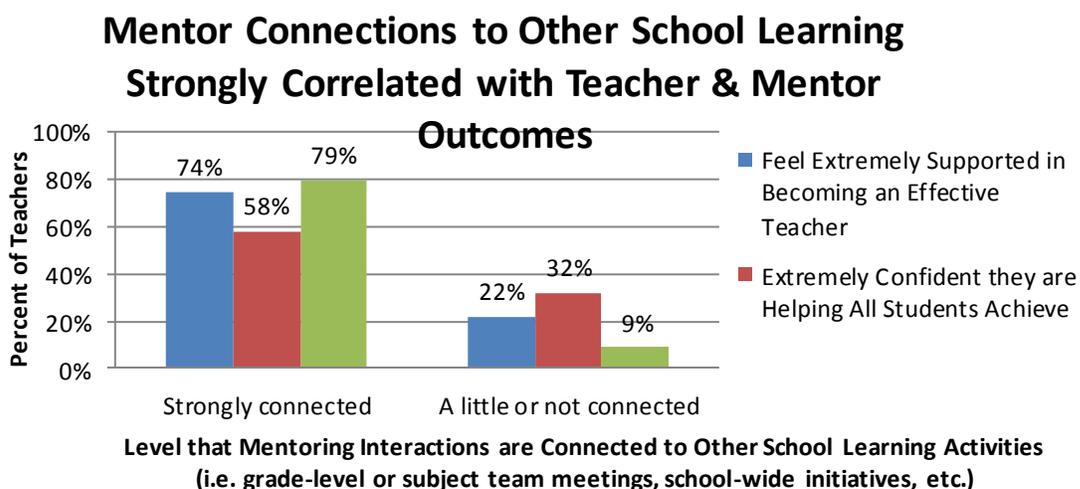
New teachers who reported their mentoring interactions were strongly connected to other school learning activities (i.e. grade/subject level team meetings, school-wide initiatives, etc.) were nearly twice as likely to be extremely confident that they are helping students achieve their fullest potential, compared with those reporting weak connections. They were also over three times more likely to feel extremely supported in becoming an effective teacher, and over eight times more likely to report that their mentor is extremely valuable. This is a powerful effect with important implications for mentor programs.

The finding might suggest that when a mentor helps a new teacher apply recently learned strategies to their own classroom context, the new teacher is much more likely to try out and succeed in using the new strategy.

Alternatively, if a mentor brings new information that is

disconnected from the other types of strategies the new teacher is learning at the school, it may feel overwhelming. Further, if the new teacher believes that the strategies being shared by the mentor are not being used by others in the school community, it may be of less value to the new teacher.

Interestingly, although NYC uses a school-based mentor model, only slightly more than a third of new teachers report that their mentoring is strongly connected to other school based learning activities. More information is needed to understand why connections are not naturally occurring on their own, and how to support better links between collaborative learning around promising teaching strategies and individual application of those strategies.

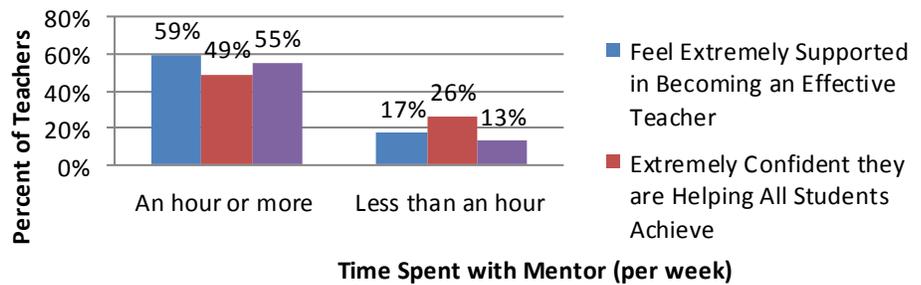


2) At least one hour of interaction time between mentors and new teachers

Reinforcing prior research on the topicⁱⁱ, new teachers who reported spending at least one hour with a mentor per week were nearly twice as likely as those who spend less than an hour to feel extremely confident in their ability to help all students achieve at their highest potential. They were also four times more likely to say their mentor is extremely valuable and more than three times likely to feel extremely supported in becoming an effective teacher. This is an impressive effect with strong implications for those seeking to support high quality mentoring and more effective teaching.

The DOE currently requires at least 1.5 hours per week for mentoring interactions. However, 17%-24% of new teachers still report having less than an hour of mentoring per week. This is most likely due to typical challenges implementing central policies at the school levelⁱⁱⁱ.

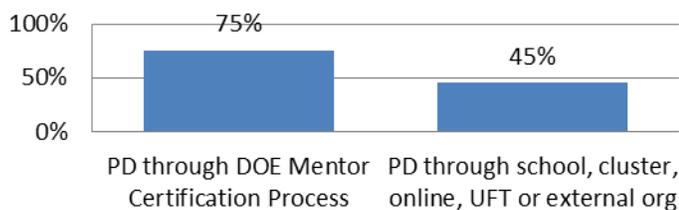
Time for Mentoring Strongly Correlated with Mentor and Teacher Outcomes



3) Completion of the DOE Mentor Certification Professional Development Program

Those mentors who completed the 12 hours of coursework required for achieving DOE certification were more likely to report that their professional development was extremely valuable^{iv} when compared with those who attended other types of PD for mentors (i.e. school PD for instructional coaches, training from external organization, UFT Teacher Center workshops, etc.). 27% of mentors reported not attending any mentoring PD.

Mentors Reporting PD is Extremely Valuable

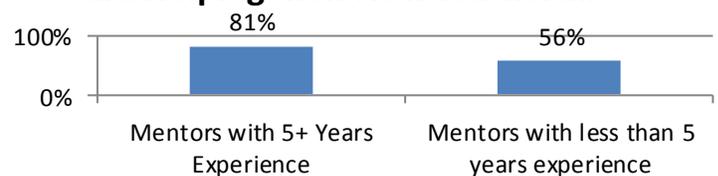


While mentors seem to strongly value the DOE's PD for certification program, only 12% of mentors throughout NYC have completed certification as of the 2012-2013 school year. This is likely due to the fact that the coursework is voluntary, and the knowledge about the certification process is still growing across NYC's 1700+ schools.

4) Mentors with at least five years of experience

Mentors who have at least five years of experience mentoring were more likely to feel confident in their ability to help their mentees become better teachers. This is not a surprising trend, as those who have been on the job longer will generally feel more confident in their abilities. However, the findings do suggest to school leaders that investing in the capacity of one or a few mentors and supporting their growth over time, may have stronger outcomes than changing mentors from year to year. Currently the majority of mentors in NYC schools have 2-4 years of experience.

Mentors Extremely Confident They are Helping their New Teachers...



Principal Perceptions

In addition to the trends that were found to be statistically significant, principals were asked a series of questions to determine what mentoring looked like from their perspective. Some of the trends are included here:

- A little over half of principals (51%) thought their mentors were extremely effective, and over a third (36%) said they were somewhat effective in helping their new teachers accelerate student learning.
- The school-level stakeholders who are most responsible for supporting and overseeing mentoring activities varies greatly. In order of frequency of reporting, staff most responsible for mentoring include the asst. principal (51%), principal (48%), instructional coach (38%), lead teacher (28%), UFT chapter leader (18%), other (16%), mentoring coordinator (5%) and New Teacher induction Committee (2%).
- The vast majority of mentors (87%) were selected by the school leader, according to principals. Less than a quarter (23%) volunteered for the position, and 2% went through an application process with committee review.
- A number of principals were interested in using DOE Mentor Program resources in the future, especially DOE training (45%), cluster-based Teacher Development Specialists (32%), mentor training through an external organization (32%) and the Principal Guide to Mentoring (32%).

Recommendations for Consideration

The following describes selected recommendations to improve central mentor programs and policies.

- ❖ **Strengthen communications to school, network and cluster leaders** to support more awareness of the power of high quality mentoring to improve teaching and learning throughout NYC. Within these communications, include the conditions necessary to ensure mentoring is of high quality and the steps needed to access resources that will support higher quality mentoring in schools.
- ❖ **Prioritize the connection between mentor work and other school learning activities** by making the link more explicit and more prominent in professional development, mentor protocols and communications about the mentor program.
- ❖ **Conduct additional research** to better understand:
 - The ideal amount of training necessary to support current or advanced mentor certification
 - Promising practices in linking mentoring efforts to other school based learning activities
 - Promising strategies enabling schools to prioritize and implement conditions of effective mentoring

Introduction

The NYC Department of Education participates in a state grant to support mentoring throughout all schools. The grant provides support for two coordinators; one from NYC's centrally-based Office of Leadership, and one from the UFT's Teacher Center. NYC DOE has provided funding to complement this grant by creating a network of eight Teacher Development Specialists (TDS). These TDS provide specific professional development for mentors throughout the City, as well as supporting networks and school leaders in creating more optimal conditions for new teacher success.

This past year, the NYC Department of Education determined that all mentors who participated in the minimum number of hours of professional development would be considered 'Certified' by the Mentoring Division of the Leadership Office. The certification process included full completion of 'Mentor Course One' which consisted of 12 hours of coursework over two days.

This year, the Mentoring Division commissioned a program evaluation to better understand the impact this professional development was having, and to distill the factors of mentoring that would support the greatest likelihood of success for mentors, new teachers, and students.

The evaluation included the development and analysis of anonymous surveys to new teachers, mentors and principals. The survey participants were chosen using stratified randomized sampling. (See methods section for more information.) This report provides the findings of the evaluation and builds on the prior 2012 report, *Promising Practices and Opportunities in NYC Mentoring*.

The information in this report is not a comprehensive view of mentoring in NYC. Rather, it provides a snapshot of information based on the results of a short survey taken by a subset of educators which will then inform Department of Education leaders about the potential value of the current and future mentoring structures. It is hoped that Department of Education leaders will be able to use this information as a reference point for supporting future decisions to support the best mentoring feasible in NYC.

Methods

Survey Development

The surveys were developed in collaboration with the Department of Education’s Office of Leadership. A different survey was developed for all three groups: new teachers, mentors and principals. Additionally, two slightly different surveys within the mentor category were developed. These addressed the differing contexts for certified and non-certified mentors. Each survey was ten or fewer questions to support rapid (three minutes or less) completion and promote higher response rates. The survey questions as distributed are attached in the Appendix.

Random Stratified Sampling

Surveys were developed and disseminated to mentors, new teachers and principals throughout NYC Department of Education schools using stratified random sampling.

To achieve stratified sampling, the Office of Leadership provided the authors with a list of names of educators in the following five groups: certified mentors, non-certified mentors, teachers of certified mentors, teachers of non-certified mentors and principals. Separate surveys were sent out to each group. We established a minimum number of required respondents for each survey, to ensure successful stratification.

Each list included names of educators from the 2012-2013 school year. Thus, new teachers receiving the survey were most often in their second year of teaching, and were asked to reflect upon their first year’s experience for the purposes of the survey. Not all the mentors who received the survey were serving as mentors at the time. In these cases, mentors were asked to reflect on their prior year’s experience.

The authors chose a random sample by first identifying the total number of educators in each category city-wide. They then calculated what number that total would need to be divided by in order to result in 100 survey recipients. The authors then used that number as the interval to select names. During each selection process, the authors would choose a random number (between one and ten) to start the process.

For example, if there were 7000 mentors, the authors would count every 70 names to select the person who would receive a survey. They would start at the 7th name on the list. The second name for selection would be 77. The third would be 147 and so on. The Department of Education then provided the email addresses for the chosen educators in each category.

Survey Platform and Outreach

The names and email addresses of the selected educators were entered into the online survey platform Survey Monkey. Emails were then sent out via the platform to each potential respondent, explaining the survey and inviting them to participate. Additionally, in order to ensure a high response rate, TDS reached out to potential survey participants via letters, emails, phone calls and visits. The final response rates from all the surveys are defined below:

| | |
|--|------------|
| Respondents for Certified Mentor Survey | N = 55 |
| Respondents for Non-certified Mentors | N = 49 |
| Total Mentors | 104 |
| Respondents for Teachers of Certified Mentors Survey | N = 55 |
| Respondents for Teachers of Non-certified Mentors Survey | N = 60 |
| Total Teachers | 115 |
| Respondents for Principal Survey | N = 61 |

Anonymity

The survey was designed to be anonymous so that educators could talk freely about their answers. Survey Monkey provides an option to ensure anonymity of responses, which was selected for this project. Additionally, only the authors have access to the backend information within Survey Monkey, ensuring that the names or email addresses of recipients have no connection to specific responses on the survey.

Analysis

The analysis focused on three sections, *What Matters Most*, *Program Conditions*, and *Principal Perceptions*. The primary analysis focused on the first section, *What Matters Most*, and reviewed the relationship between factors of mentoring and outcomes of mentoring using cross-tabs. The relationships that reached statistical significance were included in the first section of the report. Statistical significance was determined using a Student's t-test, comparing the number answering positively to each survey question within each group.

Subsequently the section on Program Conditions focuses on to what extent the factors that seemed to matter most were present in the 2012-2013 school year. Finally, the last section, Principal Perceptions, includes selected questions from the principal survey that are relevant to the first two sections, and which would support the overall mission of the Office of Leadership.

Findings

What Matters Most:

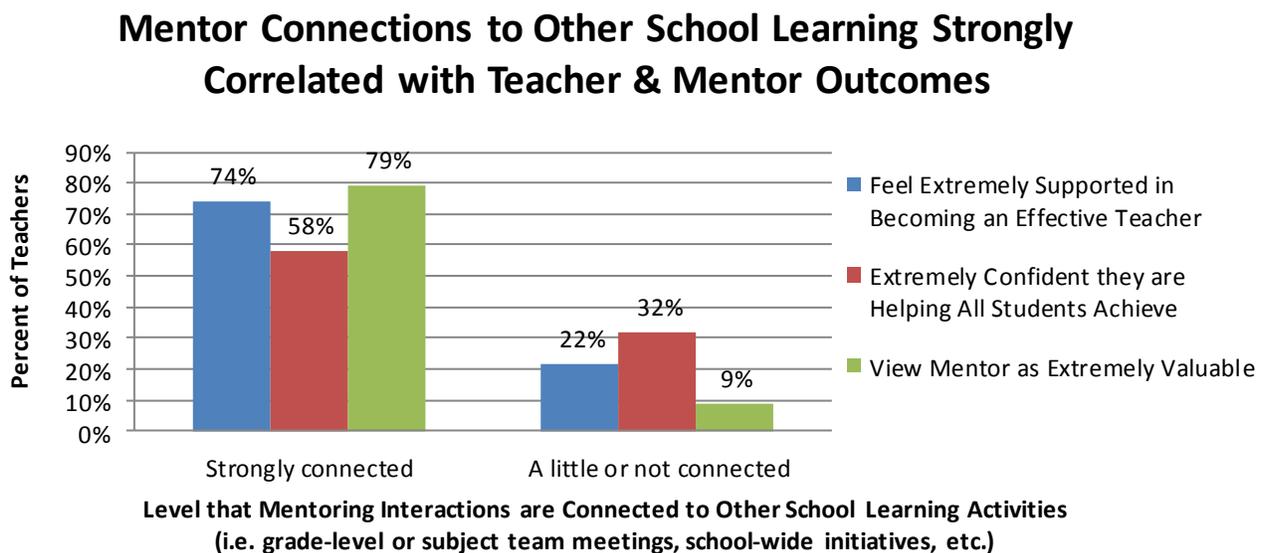
This section reviews the factors of mentoring that have the strongest relationship with the outcomes of mentors and new teachers. While none of the findings are necessarily causal, the strong relationships suggest that these aspects of mentoring hold valuable information about increasing the effectiveness of mentor programs. The findings are presented here below in order of largest to smallest effect sizes. However, all effects in this section reached statistical significance.

Connections to Other School-based Learning Activities

New teachers were asked the question to what extent their work with their mentor was connected to other school learning activities, such as grade-level or subject-team meetings, school-wide initiatives, etc. This was considered an input question. They were also asked several outcome questions including: how supported they feel in becoming an effective teacher, how confident they are in helping all students achieve at their highest potential, and how valuable their mentor is. After looking at the cross-section of the responses from the input and outcome questions, a surprisingly strong relationship was found.

As shown in **Figure 1**, when the mentoring is perceived by teachers as being strongly connected to other school learning activities, such as grade-level or subject team meetings or school-wide initiatives, teachers are a more than three times as likely than those with a weak connection to report that they feel extremely supported in becoming an effective teacher (74% vs. 22%, $p=2.78e-6$), and more than eight times likely to report that their mentor is extremely valuable (79% vs. 9%, $p=6.2e-8$).

Figure 1.



* *Supported*—Strongly connected = 74.4% (n=32), A little or not connected = 22% (n=4), $p=2.78e-6$
Confident—Strongly connected = 58.1% (n=25), A little or not connected = 32% (n=7), $p=0.0023$
Valuable – Strongly connected = 79% (n=34), A little or not connected = 9% (n=2), $p=6.2e-8$

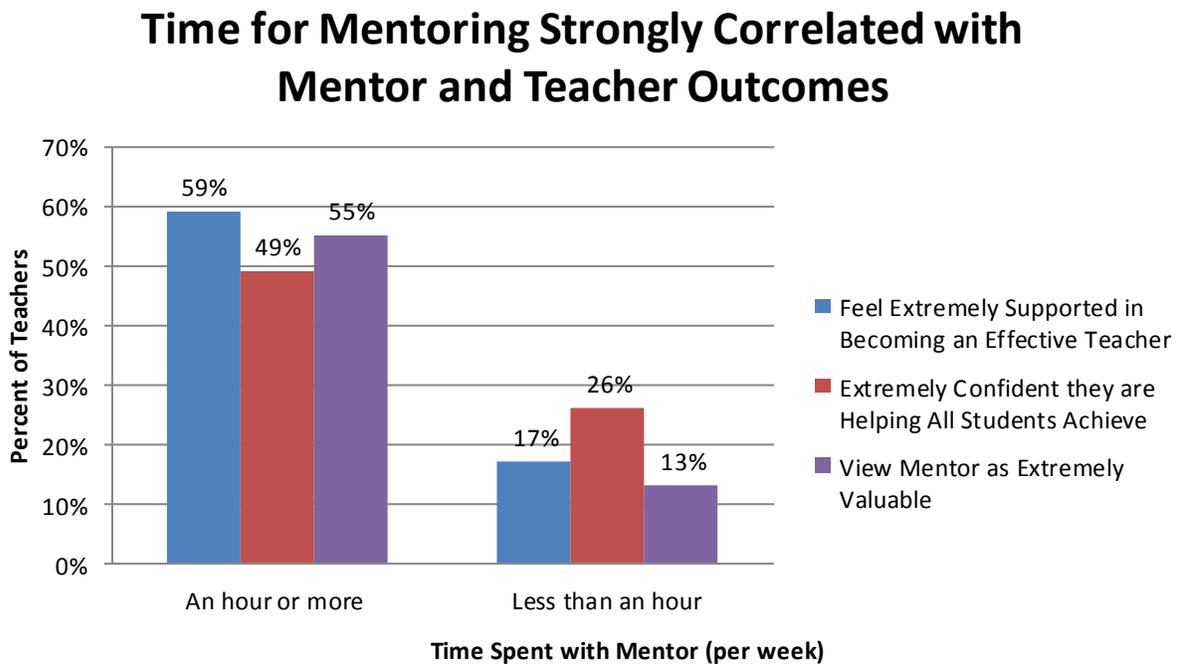
It important to note that when teachers have mentoring with strong connections to other school learning activities they are almost twice as likely as those with weak connections to report that they feel confident they are helping all students achieve to their fullest potential (58% vs. 32%). Because confidence is sometimes used as a proxy for ability, this finding indicates that that connecting mentoring to other school learning activities may have a deep impact on teacher effectiveness and student outcomes.

Time for Mentoring Interactions

New teachers were asked an input question about how much time they spend with their mentors on average. They were also asked the same outcome questions as those described above: how supported they feel in becoming an effective teacher, how confident they are in helping all students achieve at their highest potential, and how valuable their mentor is. The authors then looked at the cross-section of the input and outcome responses and found a strong relationship.

As shown in **Figure 2**, new teachers who reported spending an hour or more with their mentors are almost twice as likely as those who spent less than an hour to feel extremely confident in their ability to help all students achieve at their highest potential (49% vs. 26%, $p=0.046$). Additionally, new teachers who spent an hour or more with their mentors are four times more likely than those who spend less than an hour to say their mentor was extremely valuable (55% vs. 13%, $p=1.48e-4$) and are more than three times more likely to say they felt extremely supported in becoming an effective teacher (59% vs. 17%, $p=2.04e-4$) (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2.



* *Supported*—An hour or more=58.6%($n=51$), Less than an hour = 16.6% ($n=4$), $p=2.04 \times 10^{-4}$
Confident—An hour or more=49.4% ($n=43$), Less than an hour= 26.1% ($n=6$), $p=0.046$
Valuable – An hour or more=55.2% ($n=48$), Less than an hour = 12.5% ($n=3$), $p=1.48 \times 10^{-4}$

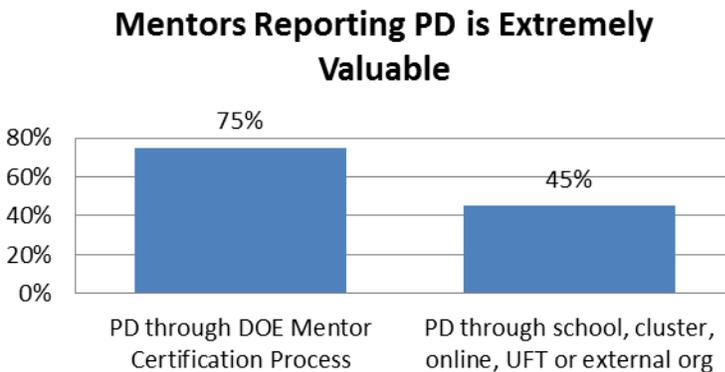
Mentor Professional Development

Mentors were asked to indicate the value of their professional development in terms of helping them achieve success with their teachers. As shown in **Figure 3**, mentors are much more likely to say their professional development is extremely valuable when it is provided through the Department of Education’s Mentor Certification program (75%), as compared with ‘other’ professional development opportunities (45%). (**Figure 3**, $p=.0051$)

The ‘other’ type of PD attended by mentors included training provided by the school, cluster, New Teacher Center, other external organizations, UFT Teacher Center workshops, or online. It is unclear how much alternative training is focused on mentor support versus instructional coaching, co-teaching, or other types of new teacher support strategies.

Not shown below, 27% of the respondents that did not go through the Department of Education Mentor Certification process said that they had not attended any PD specifically designed for mentors. This suggests that over a quarter of mentors receive no training for their role.

Figure 3.

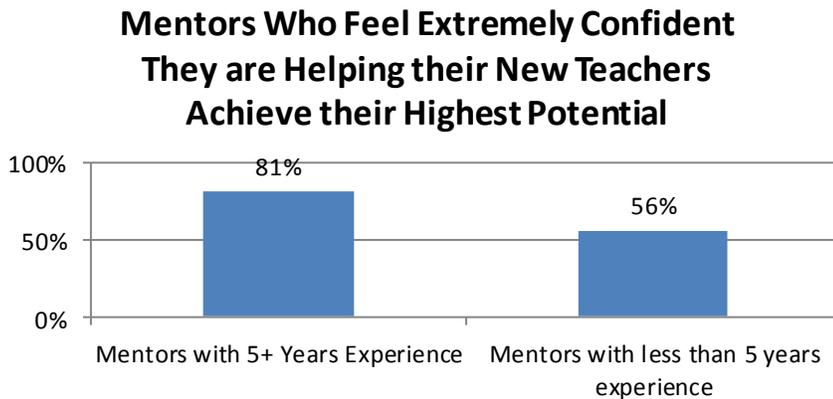


**PD Through DOE: Extremely variable=75% (n=39), PD through school or other: Extremely variable=45% (n=16), $p = 0.0051$*

Mentor Experience

Mentors were asked how many years they have been mentoring and how confident they felt that they are helping the new teachers they work with achieve at their highest potential. When the two questions were reviewed together, there was a strong relationship. As shown in **Figure 4**, mentors with more than five years of experience were more likely to feel extremely confident that they are helping all teachers succeed (81%) than mentors with less than five years of experience (56%) (**Figure 4**, $p=0.0366$).

Figure 4.



**Mentors with 5+ years = 81% (n=17), Mentors with less than 5 years = 56% (n=43), $p= 0.0366$*

Non-Significant Findings

All of the findings above this section were found to be statistically significant. However, there are some relationships which did not reach statistical significance, but may still inform the mentoring context and future research. Specifically, the perceived value of the mentor by new teachers did not seem to be affected by: the way that mentors were selected (whether they volunteered for the opportunity, or were assigned); the mentor's certification status; or the grade level being taught.

Program Conditions

In the first section, *What Matters Most*, statistically significant trends were highlighted that implied a powerful impact on outcomes for teachers and mentors. In this section, the Mentoring Program conditions are reviewed to see the extent to which the trends from Section One are present. This section does not provide a comprehensive overview of program implementation. Rather it focuses in on a few select program features which may have implications for policy and program planning moving forward. For a more detailed look at program information, please see the previous internal report, *Promising Practices and Opportunities in NYC Mentoring* (Barlin, 2012).

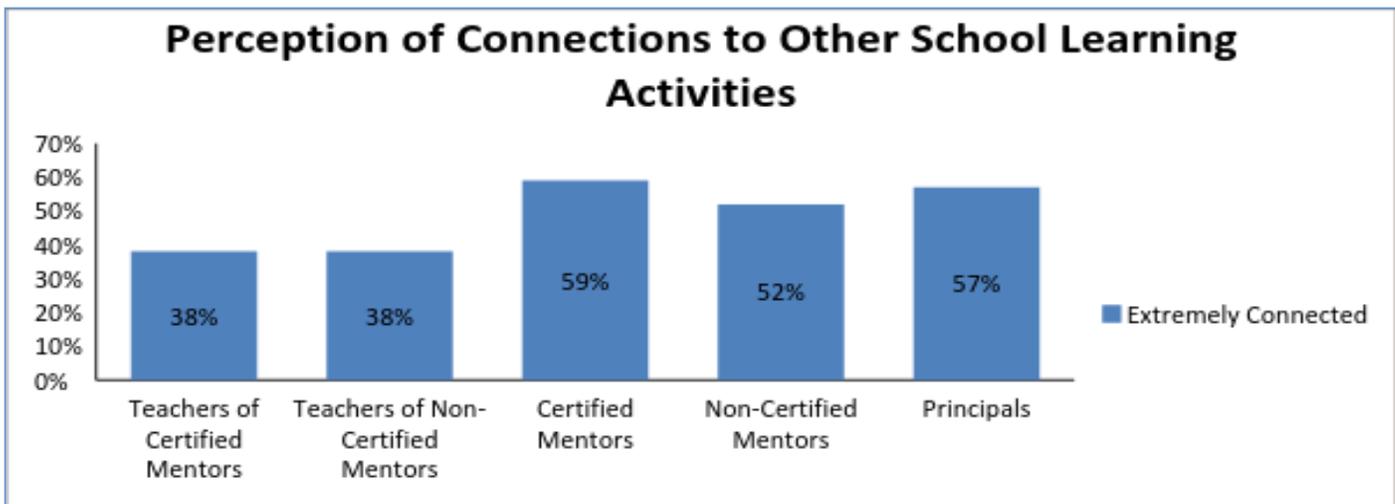
Connections to Other School-based Learning Activities

This study suggested a strong relationship between mentor connections to other school learning activities (i.e. grade-level or subject team meetings) and positive outcomes for new teachers and mentors. These positive outcomes included new teachers feeling more supported, more confident in their ability to help all students achieve, and increased perception of their mentor as extremely valuable.

However, the level of connectivity within the current state of mentoring is more modest. Only 38% of new teachers reported that the mentoring they received was extremely connected to other school learning activities. This was the same for both teachers of certified and non-certified mentors (**Figure 5**).

Certified mentors were slightly more likely than non-certified mentors to report that their mentoring work was strongly tied to other school learning activities^v (59% vs. 52%). Principals fell somewhere in between with 57% reporting that they believed the work between new teachers and mentors was extremely connected to other school learning activities.

Figure 5.



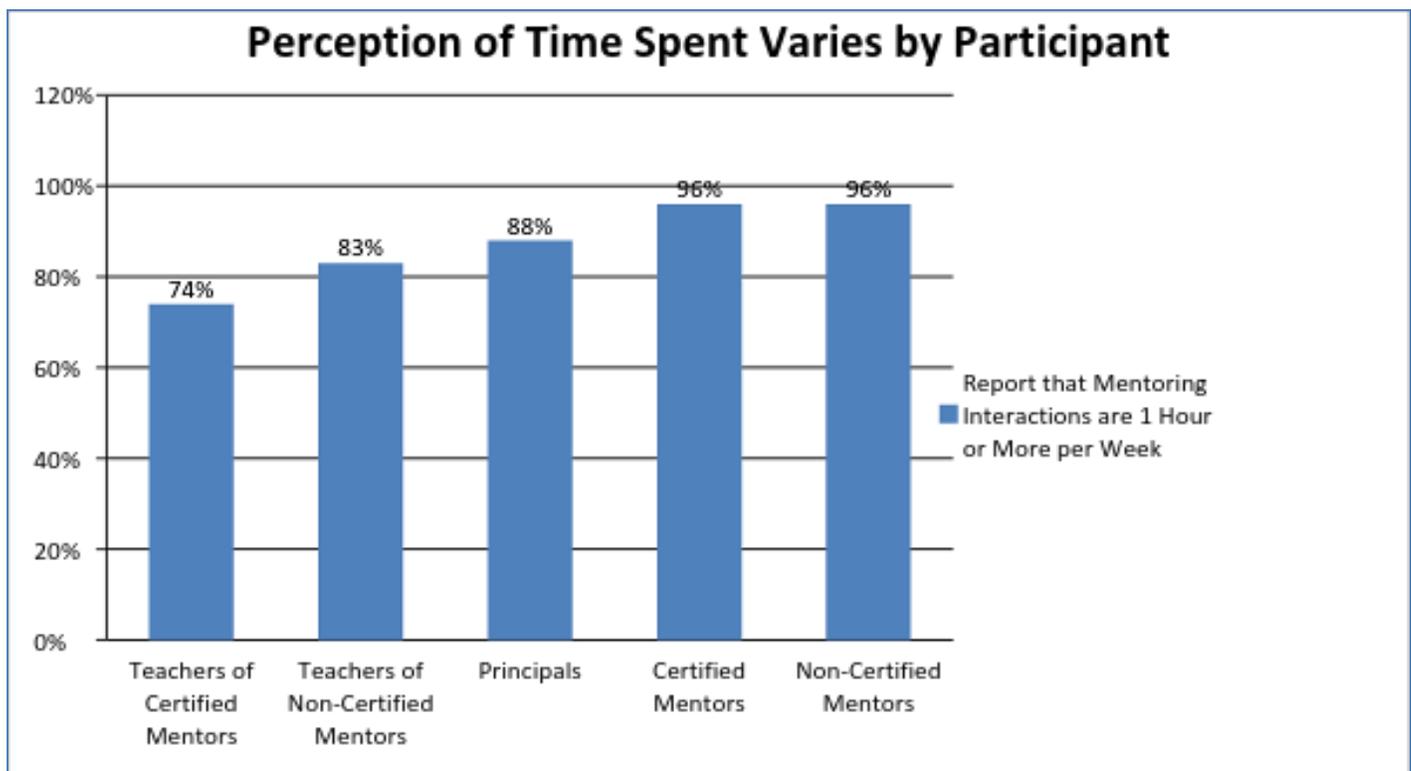
Time for Mentoring Interactions

The Mentoring Division of NYC’s Office of Leadership has mandated that each mentor spend at least 1.5 hours per week with their new teacher. Previous research has suggested that it takes at least an hour per week of mentor-new teacher time to see impact on student achievement^{vi}. This report has shown strong effects as well, with new teachers feeling more supported, more confident in their ability to help all students achieve, and more likely to report that their mentor is extremely valuable when they have at least an hour with their mentor per week.

To see the extent that mentoring time was being implemented in schools, new teachers, mentors and principals were asked how much time they believed was being spent between mentors and new teachers per week. The results varied depending on perspective.

As shown in **Figure 6**, mentors were the most likely (96%) to report that mentors were spending at least an hour with new teachers. Principals were not far behind, with 88% reporting that they believed their mentors were spending at least an hour with their new teachers. The new teachers themselves had slightly different perceptions, with 83% of teachers of non-certified mentors reporting that they spent an hour or more with their mentor. 74% of new teachers of certified mentors reported spending an hour or more^{vii}.

Figure 6.

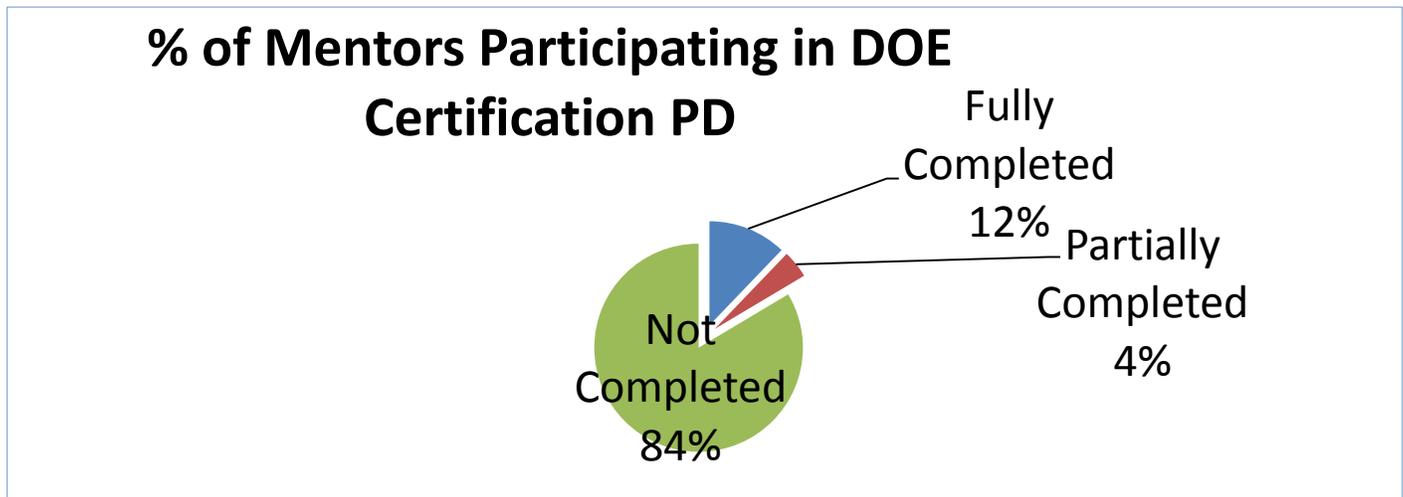


Mentor Professional Development

As discussed in section one, those who completed mentor professional development with the Department of Education's Certification Program were more than twice as likely to report that their PD experience was extremely valuable. However as **Figure 7** indicates, only 12% of mentors in the NYC DOE have fully completed the PD to achieve certification. A small number have begun the professional development but the vast majority of mentors have not completed any portion of the process.

This finding is not surprising considering that mentor certification is not mandatory. Additionally, there have historically been obstacles to system-wide communications to let school leaders and mentors know about the professional development opportunities. See *Promising Practices and Opportunities in NYC Mentoring* for more details about systemic obstacles to implementation.

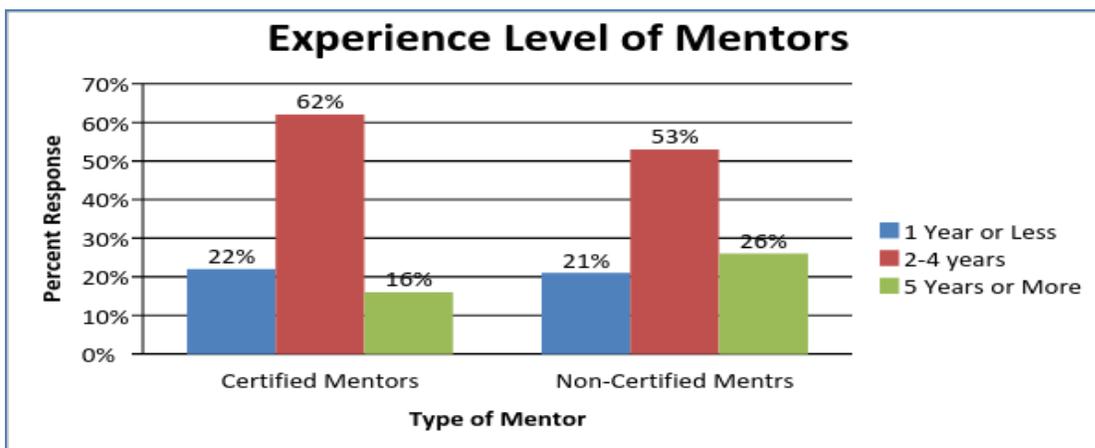
Figure 7.



Mentor Experience

As discussed in section one, the level of experience of mentors had a strong relationship with the level of confidence they had in helping all of their teachers reach their fullest potential. **Figure 8** shows that the majority of mentors in NYC have 2-4 years teaching experience. Only 16% of certified mentors, and 26% of non-certified mentors had the five years of experience that correlates with higher levels of confidence.

Figure 8.



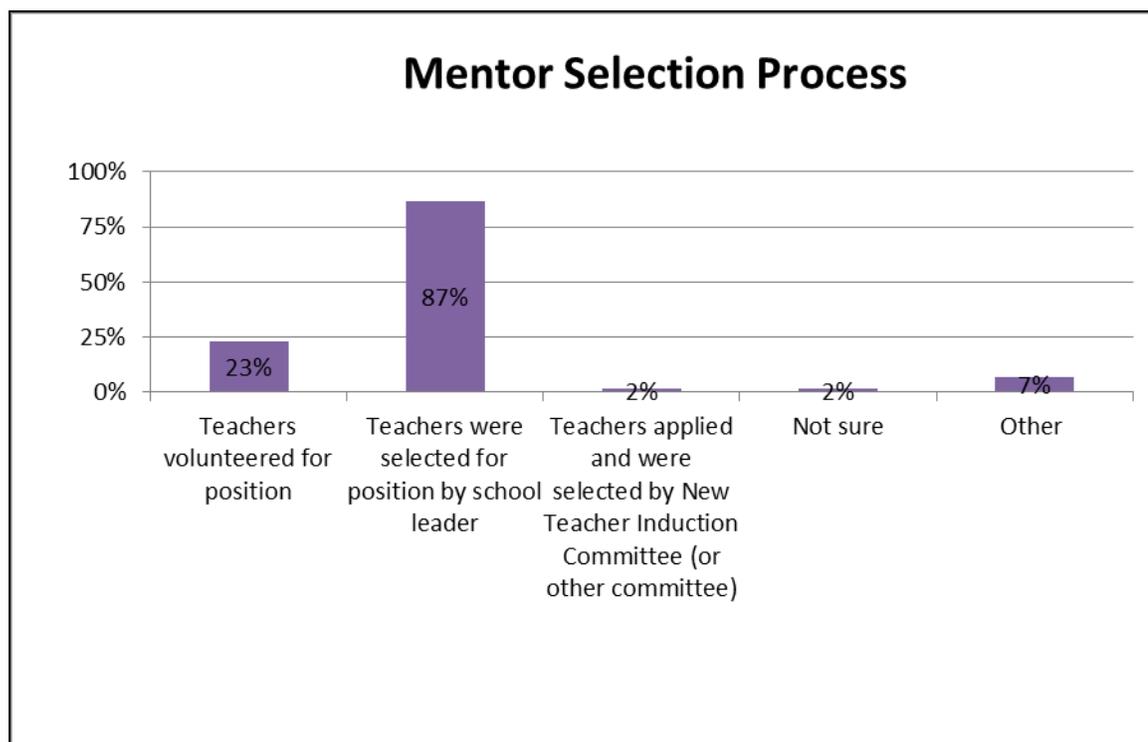
Principal Perceptions

This section explores the views of principals about mentoring. Selected charts are included to showcase principal perceptions of the effectiveness of mentoring in their school, as well as the use of resources to increase the effectiveness of that mentoring.

Mentor Selection

As shown in **Figure 9**, according to principals, the vast majority of mentors (87%) were selected by the school leader. Less than a quarter of the mentors (23%) volunteered for the position, and only 2% went through an application process that included a committee review.

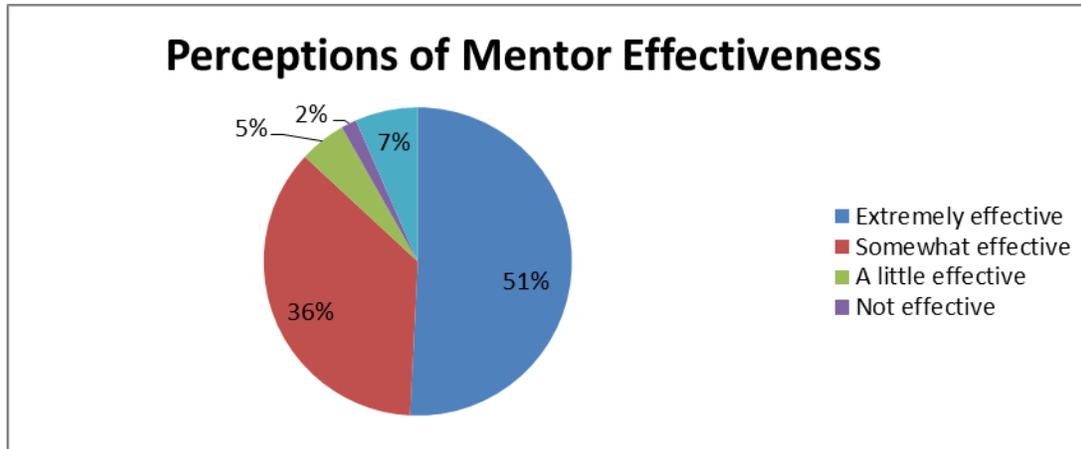
Figure 9.



Views on Mentor Effectiveness

Figure 10 demonstrates that principals had a generally favorable view of the effectiveness of the mentors in their school. A little over half of principals (51%) believe that their mentors are extremely effective in helping their teachers accelerate student learning, and a little over a third (36%) think their mentors are somewhat effective. Only 7% view their mentors as a little, or not effective.

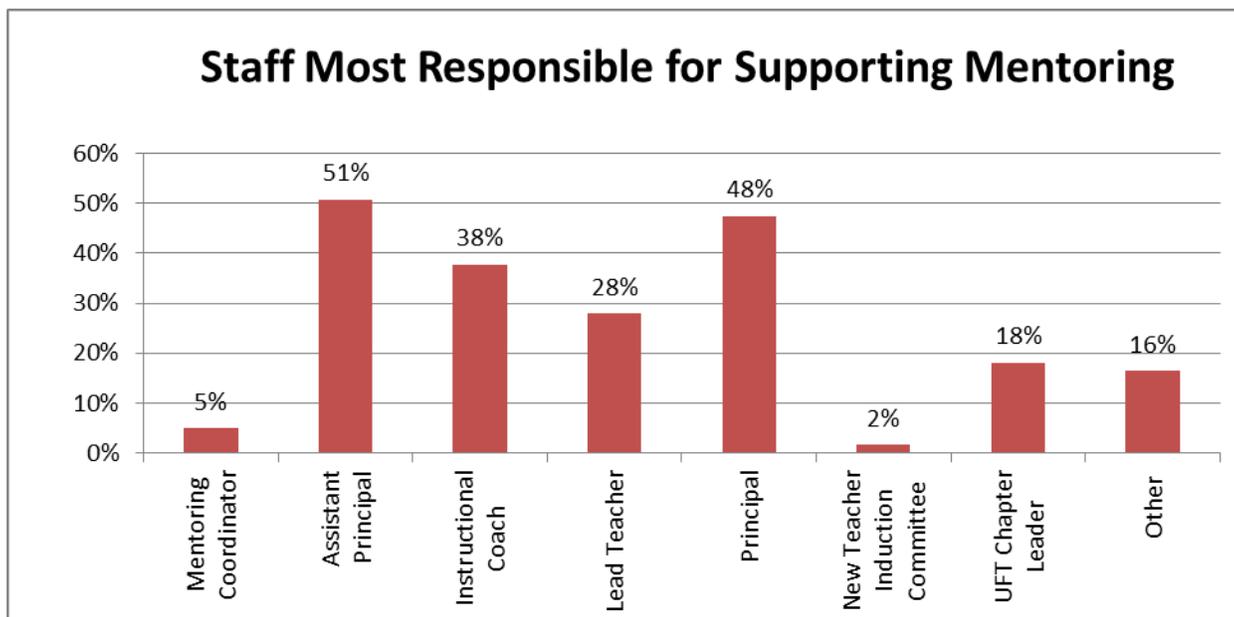
Figure 10.



Governance and Support for Mentoring

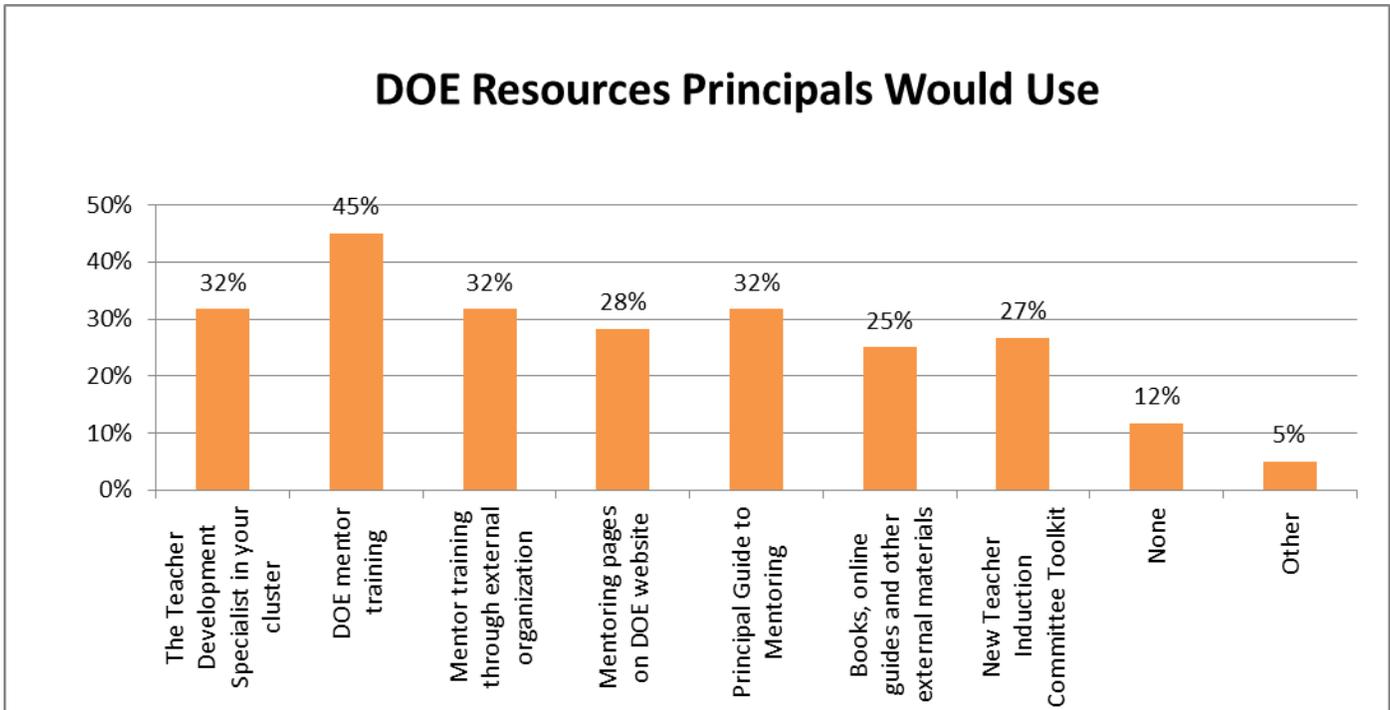
When principals were asked who was most responsible for supporting mentoring in their school, the responses varied greatly. As shown in **Figure 11**, principals and assistant principals were the most typical response; 51% and 48% respectively. Instructional coaches were the next highest response (38%) and Lead Teachers not far off (28%). UFT Chapter Leaders were somewhat likely to be responsible for providing support (18%) while New Teacher Induction Committees were only responsible in a very small number of cases (2%). 16% of responding principals suggested other staff were responsible for mentoring support. Some of the other staff listed included data specialists, co-teachers, other teachers and consultants hired by the school.

Figure 11.



Principals were asked which resources from the Department of Education’s Mentoring Division they would be likely to use. A fair percentage of principals indicated they wanted to use all of the resources available. The resource principals were most interested in was Department Of Education training (45%). The next resources of most interest with 32% response rates included Cluster-based Teacher Development Specialists, mentor training through an external organization and the Principal Guide to Mentoring. Only 12% suggested that they would not be interested in any of the resources provided.

Figure 12.



Discussion and Recommendations

There were four major trends that were found to have strong correlations with mentoring outcomes. Each of these trends are discussed in detail below, in addition to some general ideas around principal perceptions.

Recommendations are made at the end of each segment, to provide potential ideas for the Mentor Division's movement forward. These recommendations are not meant to be ironclad solutions, but rather serve as reference points for discussion to strengthen and support the current mentoring work.

Connections to Other School-based Learning Activities

This report found a powerful trend which has been less well documented historically in teacher effectiveness circles, focusing on the interactions between mentoring and other learning opportunities at the school. Specifically, when mentoring includes strong links to school subject-matter/grade level team meetings or other school-wide initiatives, new teachers are nearly twice as likely as those with weak links to report they feel more confident in helping all students achieve their fullest potential (**Figure 1**). New teachers are also more than three times more likely to feel extremely supported in becoming an effective teacher, and more than eight times likely to report that their mentor is extremely valuable when strong linkages are present. .

This finding suggests that the DOE Mentoring program could increase the perceived value of the program, and new teacher feelings of support by considerable amounts if the level of connectivity between mentoring and school learning activities was increased.

More importantly, as confidence in teaching is sometimes used as a proxy for teaching ability, opportunities to increase the level of connection between mentoring and other school-based learning activities could significantly increase new teacher effectiveness and help more students thrive. This would also serve the primary goal of the mentoring work in NYC, which is to improve the effectiveness of mentors and new teachers throughout NYC.

In general, this trend tends to reinforce the theory of application. When new teachers learn new teaching and learning strategies from their grade-level team, for example, it may be helpful to understand the theory. But teachers may not have the knowledge, skills or confidence to apply the information to their own personal context. Research suggests that the “largest struggle for teachers is not learning new approaches to teaching but implementing them^{viii}.” Thus, when a mentor can help the new teacher apply the newly learned concepts to their classroom, the new teacher is much more likely to try out and succeed in using the new strategy.

In addition, there may be a peer effect involved. Teachers may be more likely to try out new teaching strategies if they believe other faculty in the school are doing so. This is especially true for new teachers, who are often eager to ‘fit in’ with the rest of the school community.

If a mentor brings new information to try out in the classroom that is disconnected from the rest of the strategies they are learning about at the school, and it is considered to be outside of what other teachers are doing, it may feel overwhelming and be of less value to the new teacher.

Currently, only a little more than a third of new teachers (both certified and noncertified) report that their mentoring is strongly connected to other school based learning activities. Thus, the DOE Mentor Division may consider opportunities through professional development and other methods to make the connections between mentoring and other school-based learning more explicit and compelling.

Recommendations:

- Provide more emphasis on connecting mentor work to school learning activities in DOE mentor professional development.
- Articulate to principals, network leaders, and cluster leaders the power of connecting mentor work to other learnings teachers are having.
- Consider the development of a mentor protocol in which new teachers are asked to articulate one new teaching strategy they learned from their grade/subject team meeting. In response, the mentor could then provide steps to help the new teacher implement the strategy and collect data on its efficacy.

Time for Interactions between Mentors and New Teachers

Prior research in NYC^{ix} has shown that it takes at least one hour of support per week to begin showing an impact on student achievement. This report reinforces that data, and builds upon these findings. Those new teachers who report spending at least an hour per week with their mentors are almost twice as likely as those who spend less than an hour to feel extremely confident in their ability to help all students achieve at their highest potential (**Figure 2**). This finding is particularly interesting, as confidence is often used as a proxy for ability. This implies that having an hour per week with a mentor may make teachers more effective and may help students achieve at higher levels.

Additionally, new teachers who spend an hour or more with their mentors are four times more likely than those who spend less than an hour to say their mentor is extremely valuable, and three times more likely to say they feel extremely supported in becoming an effective teacher (**Figure 2**).

There are some questions about this finding, specifically the potential for a self-selection effect. Are new teachers who are spending an hour with their mentor the ones who are already more open to learning and support? If so, that could partly explain these findings. However, the professional development provided by the DOE through the certification process focuses a fair portion of its efforts on supporting new teachers in ways that engender trust and openness to the mentor. So the potential for time spent to have a powerful impact on teacher outcomes may grow if the mentors are participating in the DOE certification process.

The DOE currently has set a mandatory amount of mentoring interaction time at 1.5 hours per week. However, 17%-24% of new teachers still report having less than an hour of mentoring time per week^x. This is a relatively low percentage considering the typical issues related to policy implementation in large urban school systems. However, additional support to enable school, network and cluster leaders to understand the potential impact time for interactions has on teacher and student outcomes may support an even higher level of fidelity.

Recommendations:

- Maintain mandatory minimum requirements for interaction time between mentors and new teachers.
- Generate a coordinated communications campaign to help school, network and cluster leaders understand the need to protect the time between mentors and new teachers for meaningful interactions.

Professional Development for Mentors

This survey analysis found that mentors who completed the entire 12 hours of Department of Education professional development for certification were twice as likely as those who did not, to say that their professional development was extremely valuable. This is a powerful correlation, especially since this amount of training was just focused on Course I, the bare minimum offered by the DOE for mentors. It may suggest that even this small amount of training can begin to make an impact on the efficacy of mentors in NYC.

There are still unanswered questions about the characteristics of the professional development for mentors who did not complete the certification training. Is the professional development at the school level most often tailored specifically for mentors, or is it tailored for instructional coaches more generally, or is it simply general school-wide PD about teaching and learning that mentors participate in? More research is needed to determine what school-based professional development looks like in practice. However, this research suggests that more often than not, DOE professional development will help mentors feel more equipped for the job.

That said, only 12% of mentors throughout NYC have completed the DOE's professional development for certification. This is not surprising, given that the certification process is voluntary and the TDS structure is only a few years old. While the DOE professional development model has been growing steadily since its initiation, additional communications would be helpful to ensure that more mentors and school leaders take part in professional development programs.

It is important to note, that while mentors themselves appear to value DOE professional development more than other kinds, new teachers themselves did not view certified mentors as necessarily more valuable. This suggests additional questions. Is more time for professional development needed before an impact is shown? Is there more need for practicing the strategies in the coursework so mentors can learn how to apply the concepts more concretely? Are there systemic obstacles thwarting efforts of mentors to meet with and use best practices with their mentees^{xi}? More research is needed to understand the factors of this finding.

Recommendations:

- Generate a coordinated communications campaign to help school, network and cluster leaders understand the availability and value of the DOE's professional development for certification program.
- Conduct additional research to see how mentors with more than the minimum number of professional development hours impact new teacher outcomes.
- Explore mentor shadowing or focus groups to better understand how concepts from professional development are being applied into mentoring practice.

Mentor Experience

As this study has shown, mentors who have at least five years of experience mentoring are much more likely to feel confident in their ability to help their mentees become better teachers (**Figure 4**). This is not necessarily a powerful finding, as it is intuitive that people who have been on the job longer will feel more confident in their abilities. However, the finding does suggest that principals should invest in the capacity of one or a few mentors and support their growth over time, rather than changing mentors from year to year.

Currently the majority of mentors in NYC schools have 2-4 years of experience. Thus, it may be timely to communicate to school leaders the finding that experience matters, so as to inform their mentor selection for the upcoming year.

Recommendations:

- Add mentor experience to the list of criteria that principals may use to select mentors each year, and include it in communications to school leaders that focus on improving mentoring in schools.

Principal Perceptions

It is clear that the majority of principals believe that their mentors are helping their new teachers accelerate student learning, with a little over half saying they thought their mentors are extremely effective, and over a third saying they are somewhat effective (**Figure 10**).

One question that arises; however, is what indicators principals are using to gauge the effectiveness of the mentor. Future research might provide more information about this piece of the puzzle. However, DOE Mentor Division leaders may also consider developing protocols to help principals better evaluate how effective mentors are being.

It is also interesting to note that a variety of school stakeholders have been associated with overseeing and/or supporting mentoring interactions in the school. From principal and assistant principal, to Lead Teachers and UFT Chapter Leaders, the governance of each program seems to be specific to each school setting. It is unclear; however, what type of support these stakeholders are providing. New research to better understand what support is being provided by these stakeholders might inform the development of more nuanced policies at the central level.

One of the assumed roles of those that support mentoring might be the selection of mentors. Currently, the vast majority of mentors are assigned to that position by a school leader. A little less than a quarter reported that they volunteered for the position (**Figure 9**). Interestingly, there seemed to be little to no difference in outcomes for mentors whether they volunteered or were assigned to the mentor position.

However, the DOE Mentoring Division's preferred method of mentor selection is for teachers to apply to and be chosen by their school-based New Teacher Induction Committee (NTIC) which uses an evidence-based criteria for selection. Yet, only 2% of principals suggested they used this method of selection (**Figure 9**).

Similarly, there were very few principals who reported that NTICs were responsible for overseeing and supporting mentoring (**Figure 11**). In the 2012 report, *Promising Practices and Opportunities in NYC Mentoring*, there was discussion of some of the systemic obstacles that inhibited school leaders from implementing NTICs in their school. Some of these obstacles included lack of awareness of the value of NTIC, lack of understanding for how to put an NTIC together or what roles they would serve on an ongoing basis, and lack of time to prioritize learning about and implementing NTIC.

To increase the number of principals implementing NTICs in support of more effective mentoring, DOE leaders might consider increasing communications about their value in enhancing teacher effectiveness, and providing tools to support the building and ongoing maintenance of such committees. Additionally, considering how such committees could fit into other committees already in place (e.g. professional development committees) may make it easier for principals to take action.

Finally, it seems that a large number of principals are open to using a variety of tools and resources provided by the DOE for mentoring (**Figure 12**). Creating communications to principals and other school leaders that help them understand how they can access these tools and use them to improve teacher efficacy in their school may have great value for increasing interest, effectiveness and scale of high quality mentoring across NYC.

Recommendations:

- Create a communications campaign for school, district and network leaders around the value of mentoring, the resources offered to schools through the DOE Mentoring Division, and the potential to increase mentor and new teacher effectiveness through NTIC.
- Offer toolkits and training to support school leaders or other school committees in developing an NTIC, including a protocol for looking at indicators of mentor or mentoring success^{xii}.
- Conduct further research to understand how stakeholders are supporting mentoring in their school.

APPENDIX

Survey Questions Used in Research

New Teacher Survey (for new teachers of certified and uncertified mentors)

Please fill out the following questions to support improvements to the Office of Leadership's efforts to enable all new teachers to succeed. Your answers are anonymous, so NO ONE will be able to see your responses. We are doing this so that you can be as honest as possible in your responses. We ask that you try to be candid.

1. To what extent do you feel supported in your efforts to become an effective teacher? (choose one option)
Extremely supported Somewhat Supported A Little Supported Not Supported
2. Which areas of teaching do you wish you had more support in? (please write in your response)
3. How valuable is your mentor to helping you achieve success with your students? (choose one option)
Extremely Valuable Somewhat Valuable A little Valuable Not Valuable
4. What are the best things your mentor does to support you? (please write in your response)
5. What changes would you suggest to improve your experience with mentoring? (please write in your response)
6. How much is the work you do with your mentor connected to the work you do in other school activities and professional development (i.e. grade level or subject team meetings, school-wide initiatives, etc.)?
Extremely connected Somewhat Connected A little Connected Not Connected
7. To what extent do you feel confident in your ability to help all students achieve at their highest potential?
Extremely Confident Somewhat Confident A little Confident Not Confident
8. How long do you plan on remaining teaching in your school:
Less than a year 1-3 years 4-10 years more than 10 years
9. What level *best* describes the level of students you teach: elementary school middle school
high school
10. On average, how much time do you spend per week with your mentor? (choose one option)
Less than one hour An hour or more

Certified Mentors Survey

Please fill out the following questions to support improvements to the Office of Leadership's efforts to enable all new teachers and mentors to succeed. Your answers are completely anonymous. Please be as candid as possible in your responses.

If you are no longer a mentor, please answer the questions using your best recollection of your work while you were mentoring.

1. How much time do you typically spend per week with your new teacher(s)?

An hour or more Less than one hour

2. To what extent do you feel supported in your efforts to become an effective mentor?

Extremely supported Somewhat Supported A Little Supported Not Supported

3. How valuable is your mentor professional development in helping you to achieve success with the teacher(s) you support?

Extremely Valuable Somewhat Valuable A little Valuable Not Valuable

4. What do you like the best about the mentor trainings you participate in? (Write N/A if you have not attended any trainings)

5. Which areas of mentor professional development do you wish you had more of and/or what changes would you make to help improve the sessions?

6. To what extent is the professional development connected to the work teachers are doing at the school (i.e. on subject or grade level teams, school-wide initiatives, etc.)?

7. To what extent do you feel confident in your ability to help teachers achieve at their highest potential?

Extremely Confident Somewhat Confident A little Confident Not Confident

8. How long do you intend to remain a mentor?

Less than a year 1-3 years 4-10 years more than 10 years

9. What additional comments would you like to provide to help us improve the way new teachers are supported in NYC?

10. How many years have you been serving as a mentor? One year or less, 2-4 years, 5 or more years

Un-Certified Mentors Survey

Please fill out the following questions to support improvements to the Office of Leadership's efforts to enable all new teachers and mentors to succeed. Your answers are completely anonymous. If you are no longer a mentor, please answer the questions using your best recollection of your work while you were mentoring.

1. How much time do you typically spend per week with your new teacher(s)?

An hour or more Less than one hour

2. To what extent do you feel supported in your efforts to become an effective mentor?

Extremely supported Somewhat Supported A Little Supported Not Supported

3. How valuable is your mentor professional development in helping you to achieve success with the teacher(s) you support?

Extremely Valuable Somewhat Valuable A little Valuable Not Valuable

4. Did you or do you attend professional development to support your mentoring work? If so, please mark the type of PD you attend (mark all that apply).

- a. Central DOE or Cluster professional development for mentors
- b. New Teacher Center professional development for mentors
- c. School professional development for mentors and/or instructional coaches
- d. External professional development for mentors and/or instructional coaches
- e. I do not attend any professional development to support my mentoring

5. Which areas of mentor professional development do you wish you had more of and/or what changes would you make to help improve the sessions?

6. To what extent is the professional development connected to the work teachers are doing at the school (i.e. on subject or grade level teams, school-wide initiatives, etc.)?

7. To what extent do you feel confident in your ability to help teachers achieve at their highest potential?

Extremely Confident Somewhat Confident A little Confident Not Confident

8. How long do you intend to remain a mentor?

Less than a year 1-3 years 4-10 years more than 10 years

9. What additional comments would you like to provide to help us improve the way new teachers are supported in NYC?

10. How many years have you been serving as a mentor? One year or less, 2-4 years, 5 or more years

Principal/Assistant Principal Survey

Research has suggested that when new teacher mentoring is done well, it can make brand new teachers as or more effective than experienced teachers. The Office of Leadership is currently seeking to support schools in enhancing their mentoring efforts. We appreciate your candor in answering the following questions, which will help us get better at helping you.

1. How much time per week do your mentors meet with their new teachers?

Less than an hour More than an hour

2. How effective are your mentors in helping their new teachers accelerate student learning?

Extremely effective Somewhat effective A little effective Not effective Not Sure

3. Which staff is most responsible for supporting new teacher mentoring in your school? (please check all that apply)

- a. Mentoring coordinator
- b. Assistant Principal
- c. Instructional Coach
- d. Lead Teacher
- e. Principal
- f. New Teacher Induction Committee
- g. UFT Chapter Leader
- h. Not sure
- i. Other, please describe

4. How much is the work between mentors and new teachers connected other adult learning opportunities at the school (i.e. grade level or subject team meetings, school-wide initiatives, etc.)?

Extremely connected Somewhat Connected A little Connected Not Connected

5. What would you like to see your mentors most focus on with their new teachers?

6. Which, if any, of the following resources have you used to support effective mentoring in your school?

- a. The Teacher Development Specialist in your cluster
- b. DOE mentor training
- c. Mentor training through external organization
- d. Mentoring pages on DOE website
- e. Principal Guide to Mentoring
- f. Books, online guides and other external materials
- g. New Teacher Induction Committee Toolkit
- h. None
- i. Other, please describe

7. Which, if any, of the following resources would you be interested in using in the future to support more effective mentoring in your school?
 - a. The Teacher Development Specialist in your cluster
 - b. DOE mentor training
 - c. Mentor training through external organization
 - d. Mentoring pages on DOE website
 - e. Principal Guide to Mentoring
 - f. Books, online guides and other external materials
 - g. New Teacher Induction Committee Toolkit
 - h. None
 - i. Other, please describe

8. Optional: What other types of activities, beyond mentoring, does your school engage in to support new teachers? (i.e. new teacher support groups, reduced course load, modeling, etc.)

9. Please add any additional comments here.

END NOTES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY END NOTES

ⁱ All data represented in the charts here reached statistical significance. Please see full report to view n and p values for each chart.

ⁱⁱ Rockoff, Jonah. *Does Mentoring Reduce Turnover and Improve Skills of New Employees? Evidence from Teachers in New York City*. National Bureau of Economic Research. 2008

ⁱⁱⁱ See *Promising Practices and Opportunities in NYC Mentoring* (Barlin, 2012) for more insights on obstacles to implementation.

^{iv} While most mentors experience of professional development through the certification program is extremely valuable, new teachers are not yet perceiving mentors who are certified as being more valuable. Please see full report for insights into potential reasons for the disconnect.

FULL REPORT END NOTES

^v The difference between teachers of certified mentors and teachers of non-certified mentors was not tested for statistical significance. The discrepancy in reporting may therefore be due to chance.

^{vi} Rockoff, Jonah. *Does Mentoring Reduce Turnover and Improve Skills of New Employees? Evidence from Teachers in New York City*. National Bureau of Economic Research. 2008.

^{vii} The difference between the teachers of certified mentors and non-certified mentors was not tested for statistical significance. The discrepancy in reporting may therefore be due to chance.

^{viii} Gulamhussein, Allison. *Teaching the Teachers: Effective Professional Development in an Era of Accountability*. Center for Public Education. 2013

^{ix} Rockoff, Jonah. *Does Mentoring Reduce Turnover and Improve Skills of New Employees? Evidence from Teachers in New York City*. Columbia Business School, 2008.

^x See *Promising Practices and Opportunities in NYC Mentoring* for more insights on systemic obstacles to time for meeting interactions between mentors and new teachers.

^{xi} See *Promising Practices and Opportunities in NYC Mentoring* for more insights on systemic obstacles to high-quality mentoring efforts.

^{xii} One protocol mentioned in the research for the prior report included a portfolio for new teachers and mentors, collecting data on new teachers progress. This could then double as a portfolio assessment for the schools that utilize that option during evaluation.