

Induction and Mentoring of Newly Qualified Teachers in Kindergartens and Schools in Norway

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Abstract: This article presents the main features of, and analyzes the work on, facilitating induction and mentoring for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in Norway. The methodological approach is a review of a variety of sources of political, scientific and professional nature.

The article addresses the following research questions: What characterizes the different milestones in the history of induction and mentoring in Norway? Which stakeholders have been active partners in the policymaking, and how has this contributed to changing and developing the national program for induction and mentoring for NQTs in Norway?

The narrative on induction and mentoring in Norway can be divided into four periods, or as we have chosen to call them, milestones. Although each milestone has distinct developmental traits and challenges, our analysis shows some pervasive features that have characterized the work throughout the whole history of induction and mentoring for NQTs in Norway. First, state authorities, represented by the Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate of Education and Training, have played a key role in leading and facilitating cooperation between the stakeholders. Furthermore, there has been a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities between employee organizations, regional authorities and teacher education institutions.

The history of induction and mentoring in Norway is one of many examples where education, research and politics are intertwined. In 2021, the results of a comprehensive national survey will be published and discussed between the stakeholders before further policy decisions are made.

Keywords: newly qualified teachers (NQTs), white papers, stakeholders, national framework

Introduction

In the spring of 2017, the Norwegian Parliament (in Norwegian *Stortinget*) made the following unanimous decision:

The Storting asks the Government, in collaboration with the stakeholders, to design a national framework for a mentoring system which ensures that all newly qualified teachers are covered by the national framework, and which allows for local adjustments. (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, translated from Norwegian by the authors)

Based on this decision, the Ministry of Education and Research established a working group consisting of representatives from the teacher organizations, employers' interest organizations, state authorities and teacher education programs. After one year of work, these stakeholders signed an agreement that included principles for mentoring of NQTs in kindergarten, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools. The principles pointed out the guidelines for induction and mentoring based on teacher education as a continuum of professional learning into the teaching profession. The agreement also specified the roles and obligations of the various stakeholders. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Research commissioned the Directorate of Education and Training to implement four measures that were intended to facilitate the implementation of the national framework (Kunnskapsdepartementet/ Ministry of Education and Research, 2018b):

The Directorate of Education and Training should:

1. Prepare guidelines to support school and kindergarten owners who, according to the Working Environment Act, have the primary responsibility for implementing all types of further education for their employees – i.e. also mentoring newly qualified teachers based on the principles.
2. Develop a national framework for a master's degree program (30 ECTS) as a formal education for experienced teachers who would like to be mentors for NQTs.

3. Announce assignments to the university and university college sector to offer this education in line with the adopted framework for the education program.
4. Conduct a national evaluation to identify the extent to which the implementation of the new agreement meets the Parliament's stated goal of the program including all NQTs.

The methodological approach

In this article, we are studying the history of induction and mentoring in Norway. Our research questions are: What characterizes the different milestones in the history of induction and mentoring in Norway? Which stakeholders have been active partners in the policymaking, and how has this contributed to changing and developing the national program for induction and mentoring for NQTs in Norway?

The methodological approach is based on reviews of mainly four types of documents. These are policy documents such as white papers related to reforms in teacher education and the transition from being a student to becoming a teacher in kindergartens and schools. Furthermore, we present and discuss results from national surveys and evaluations on induction and mentoring. The data also includes scientific articles, books, reports and Norwegian dissertations focusing on induction and mentoring for NQTs. Documents from the Norwegian Network for Mentoring of NQTs,¹ such as annual reports (2004–2020), reports from meetings, seminars and conferences, and research presentations and discussions in the network, also provide parts of the data.

We have chosen to organize our article mainly based on a linear historical and narrative form of presentation divided into four main periods. The first period extends from about 1980 up to 2002. During this period, we find the first traces of issues related to induction and mentoring for NQTs being discussed in academic and political contexts in Norway. In

¹ <https://www.nyutdannede.no/en>

1998 two local pilot projects were launched in which different types of measures aimed at NQTs were tested.

The next period extends from 2003 to 2008. In 2003, a national project aimed at induction and mentoring was initiated, which gradually included all groups of NQTs in kindergartens, primary schools and lower and higher secondary education. The project immediately received strong support from teacher education institutions in Norway, and a national network was established in which all these institutions were represented. This network's main tasks were to offer mentor education and collaborate with local authorities in order to increase the scope of mentoring aimed at NQTs.

In the period from 2009–2016 the national program changed character, from being time-limited projects to becoming a more permanent program financed through annual allocations in the state budget. National surveys showed that more and more NQTs were included in the program, and the mentor education was strengthened and expanded. The first formal agreement between state authorities and key stakeholders was signed in 2009 to secure NQTs access to mentoring.

The fourth period covers the years from 2016 to the present. In 2016 a national survey showed that about 40 % of all NQTs were still without any form of mentoring. This triggered the former mentioned a unanimous decision in the Norwegian Parliament in 2017. Based on the decision, state authorities worked out—in collaboration with stakeholders—national guidelines intended to secure all new teachers mentoring during the first two years of work after graduating from initial teacher education. A new national curriculum for a master's level mentoring program (30 ECTS) was also implemented.

As is evident from the discussion of the term “induction” in the introductory article of this book, what we refer to as mentoring is just one of several possible measures in a comprehensive strategy to support NQTs. A special feature of the Norwegian induction program is however that mentoring in the form of targeted and formalized conversations between professionals, often referred to in English as guidance, counseling or coaching (in Norwegian *veiledning*), has played a crucial role in the programs. The most important reason for this is probably that since the 1980s competence and school development has been a

priority and mandatory task for all schools in Norway. The NQTs are, of course, included in this and, in many cases, the content of the development work addresses subjects and didactic challenges that they are well acquainted with from their updated initial teacher education. The main challenges of the NQTs are therefore not primarily related to the content of school subjects or curriculum development and implementation, but rather to the lack of professional experience as catalysts to transform theory and theoretical knowledge into practical skills. In the Norwegian tradition reflective mentoring in the form of peer mentoring has been a central part of all development and implementation work in kindergartens and schools over the last 40 years (Handal & Lauvås, 1983; Lauvås & Handal, 2014). This might also explain why mentoring as a reflective strategy for development and learning (Schön, 1987) has had such a wide place in induction in Norway.

The first milestone: Pilot projects and their background (1982–2002)

Following a commission from the previously named Ministry of Church-, Education and Research, Karl Øyvind Jordell conducted a survey of NQTs in 1982 (Jordell, 1982). He concluded that there was a need to implement special measures aimed at NQTs' professional development. He emphasized, among other things, the special responsibility of school leaders to make the best possible arrangements for new teachers. Jordell also proposed starting testing of different models for mentoring, and the allocation of funding to reduce working hours for both NQTs and mentors as compensation for the extra work involved. Furthermore, he suggested that cooperation should be arranged between schools and teacher education in order to establish induction programs (Jordell, 1982, pp. 450–451).

Jordell's report was not followed up politically. The question was not put on the political agenda before the OECD in 1990 called for a more effective and systematic system of mentoring for new teachers in Norway (NOU:22, 1996). As a response to this, the Ministry proposed to introduce a candidate year with certification for students after completing initial

teacher education (Kirke-, utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet/Ministry of Church, Education and Research, 1997a). This year should mainly consist of regular teaching work in a school, but should also include both mentoring and assessment before the candidate received his/her formal teaching diploma. In the discussion that followed, the suggestion received strong criticism, and mentoring programs for NQTs gained support as an alternative. The proposal for a candidate year with certification was therefore set aside, but was relaunched in the White Paper no. 11 (Kunnskapsdepartementet/Ministry of Education and Research, 2009) with reference to Sweden, where similar measures were being discussed (cf. Fransson's article in this anthology). However, the proposal was rejected again, partly because of opposition from the teacher organizations in Norway, and has not been a topic of political discussion since.

Based on the objections to a candidate year, the Ministry of Church, Education and Research in 1997 instead invited teacher-education programs to seek funding for projects including mentoring for NQTs. Teacher education institutions were to be responsible for the projects, but was to be carried out in close collaboration with schools and kindergartens, school and kindergarten owners, regional authorities and teacher organizations (Kirke-, utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet/Ministry of Church, Education and Research, 1997b).

With this announcement, important educational policy decisions were made that would prove to be of great importance for the further development of mentoring for NQTs in Norway (Bjerkholt, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2013; Skagen, 2011). In the announcement text for the project funds, the following three principles were highlighted: The first principle was that teacher education should motivate and initiate the work on developing mentoring programs. This principle expanded the teacher education area of responsibility from mainly relating to the education of teacher students, to including measures aimed at NQTs. Secondly, the programs should be developed in collaboration with regional and local authorities. The third principle was that the projects should be a collaborative area for the development of quality in both teacher education and in kindergartens and schools in general.

It was also pointed out that mentoring should be offered individually and in groups as a key strategy. This mentoring should be based on the experiences and needs of the individual NQTs, not on predetermined themes provided by the local school or authority. The Ministry's announcement referred to the dominant approach of the time in the field of mentoring in teacher education (Skagen, 2011; Sundli, 2001), the strategy "Action and Reflection" (Handal & Lauvås, 1983; Lauvås & Handal, 1990, 2000, 2014; Olsen, 2013a, 2013b, 2015). This approach is characterized by mentoring based on the needs of the individual mentee, intended to contribute to learning through reflection on action (Schön, 1983, 1987). This form of mentoring is in line with an "educational approach" (Richter et al., 2013). This clearly differs from an approach where the mentor is the expert and the mentee is the submissive learner (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995; Feiman-Nemser, 1998, 2001). The strategy represents a decisive emphasis on the interaction between the mentor and the mentee, to be carried out according to dialogic principles. The purpose is that through this the NQTs can receive support to reflect on experiences and challenges in their daily work guided by a formally qualified and experienced colleague, where they both can develop and learn. Thus, mentoring becomes an important supplement to other types of learning activities the NQT participates in, for example, through collaboration with colleagues and in courses and formal training (Eraut, 2004, 2010).

During the period from 1998–2002, the Ministry funded two pilot projects on mentoring of NQTs, both individually and in groups. Eva M. Bjerkholt at Telemark University College was responsible for the project on mentoring NQTs in primary and secondary schools, and Sidsel Hauge at the Oslo University College was responsible for the project on mentoring newly qualified kindergarten teachers.

Both projects (Bjerkholt, 1999, 2002; Hauge, 2001) were considered successful (Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet/Ministry of Education and Research, 2002a), and formed the basis for starting a national project of mentoring for NQTs in kindergartens and schools (Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet/Ministry of Education and

Research, 2002a) which, in principle, has been continued as a national program until today.

The second milestone: National projects and a national network (2003–2008)

Based on the positive outcomes of the two pilot projects, mentoring of NQTs was launched as a national project in 2003. It was financed by state funding, which allowed more universities and university colleges with teacher education programs to join the project.

The response from the teacher education programs was overwhelming, and already from 2004, the initiative included 27 teacher education institutions and covered most of Norway. At this stage, NQTs in upper secondary schools were also included (Bjerkholt, 2004).

The national project was initially planned to be limited to the period 2003–2007, but a national evaluation report published in 2006 (Dahl, Buland, Finne, & Havn, 2006) showed very positive effects of the measures implemented. The survey documented that a large majority of the NQTs, leaders in kindergartens and schools, and the local mentors, thought that mentoring had made the NQTs:

- Better with regard to reflecting on their own practice and what leads to a good learning environment in classes
- Believe in their own abilities
- Better at handling and mastering class leadership
- Better at handling and mastering their whole work situation
(Dahl et al., 2006 p. iii)

Furthermore, in 2003 the Ministry established a national “Network for mentoring of newly qualified teachers” in kindergartens, schools and upper secondary schools. The network’s main task was to coordinate and develop the quality of teacher education institutions’ work with mentoring programs. The members of the network were professional key personnel at the universities and university colleges participating in the work nationally. This network has been financed ever since by the Directorate

of Education and Training and has to date been an important partner for the state authorities in promoting induction and mentoring for NQTs in Norway.

The national network was also intended to serve as an arena for sharing experiences and promoting quality in development of induction and mentoring of NQTs. The 2006 evaluation report (Dahl et al., 2006) highlighted the importance of the network as a professional forum in the wider sense. The report emphasized that the network, which included both teacher educators and researchers, had published several research reports and articles focusing on mentoring NQTs. The network was “thus developing a special field of knowledge and research on NQTs” (Dahl et al., 2006, p. 24).

National and international research (Flokenes & Mæhle, 1981; Gold, 1996; Hubermann, 1993; Jordell, 1982, 1986; Strømnes, 1979) had shown that the development in schools and society as a whole up to the turn of the millennium had brought a number of new challenges and tasks to teachers in schools and kindergartens. In 1992 teacher education for classes 1–10 was extended to four years, but it was predominantly theoretical and subject oriented. Pedagogy and practice constituted only a minor part of the educational process (Nilssen, 2007). This underlined the need for induction and mentoring, but the 2006 evaluation report showed that only a few of the NQTs were covered by the program. In 2005, a little over 300 NQTs were participating, of which 100 were kindergarten teachers, 150 teachers in primary and secondary schools and about 60 teachers in upper secondary schools (Dahl et al., 2006, p. 24). One obvious reason for the limited participation was that many employers, from both custom and tradition, believed the NQTs did not need any form of support or mentoring (Bjerkholt, 1999).

The broad support from teacher education on the other hand, can be seen as an expression of concern and familiarity with the challenges facing NQTs. White papers and publications from the turn of the millennium onwards show increased attention to national and international research that supported such a view (Bjerkholt, 2013). Gradually, Slettes it was recognized that the knowledge and specialized skills required of professional practitioners could not be adequately learned during initial

teacher education. What is taught in teacher education represents primarily a starting point and must be developed through targeted and systematic training and continuing education in the profession (Bjerkholt, 2013; Eik, 2014; Eraut, 2004, 2010; Grimen, 2008; Ødegård, 2011; Østrem, 2008).

Another factor that affected employers' limited interest in acting was of an economic nature. For teacher education, participation in the mentoring programs entailed new tasks and was therefore financed through earmarked government grants. However, regarding the financing of the specific measures aimed at the NQTs, it was argued by the national authorities that this was a voluntary program provided for through the annual framework grants for operating schools and kindergartens. This meant that measures aimed at mentoring NQTs had to be financed locally, and thus prioritized in competition with other types of continuing education for all teacher groups. We shall return to the consequences this Slettes may have had for the further development of induction and mentoring for NQTs in Norway.

The third milestone: Further national surveys and formal agreements between stakeholders (2009–2016)

White Paper no. 11: "The teacher. The role and education" (Kunnskapsdepartementet/Ministry of Education and Research, 2009), stated that the Norwegian Government wanted to further develop the system of mentoring for NQTs as a national program (Bjerkholt, 2013, p. 20). The political debate following the report showed that there was broad agreement on this. No significant changes were made regarding financing, but the need to coordinate and strengthen cooperation between the stakeholders was highlighted.

Following up this White Paper, a letter of intent was signed by the Ministry of Education and research and The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS),² which aimed to increase the num-

² <https://www.ks.no/om-ks/ks-in-english/>

ber of NQTs receiving mentoring (Kunnskapsdepartementet/Ministry of Education and Research & KS, 2009). Formal national and regional collaborative forums were also set up with representatives from employers, teachers' organizations, teacher education and political authorities to coordinate the work.

Since the 1970s, teacher education had offered continuing education in mentoring for practice teachers for student teachers in kindergartens and schools. With the extension of the mentoring programs for NQTs, there was a need to strengthen the education of mentors (Bjerkholt, 2002, 2013; Bullough, 2012; McNally, 2016). A working group was therefore appointed to develop new national guidelines for a continuing mentoring education program (30 ECTS) (Kunnskapsdepartementet/Ministry of Education and Research & KS, 2009). With minor adjustments, these guidelines were in effect up until 2019 (Kunnskapsdepartementet/Ministry of Education and Research, 2010a, 2010b).

In this period three national surveys were carried out to measure the effect of the mentoring programs. Two of these were financed by state funds and carried out by external consultancy agencies (Kunnskapsdepartementet/Ministry of Education and Research, 2011, 2012). The third study was conducted under the auspices of the largest teachers' organization in Norway (Fladmoe & Karterud, 2012). While the two state-initiated surveys mainly obtained data from NQTs and leaders in schools and kindergartens, the survey conducted by the teachers' organization also included data from the mentors. This survey found that the most important success factors for establishing sustainable mentoring programs were: a) commitment from the leaders in kindergartens and schools; b) time allocated to mentoring for both NQTs and mentors; and c) contact with teacher education (Fladmoe & Karterud, 2012).

In short, the surveys showed that all parties directly involved considered the effect of the mentoring programs as consistently positive. At the same time, it was revealed that about 40 % of the NQTs were not included in any formal mentoring programs.

In the period from 2014–2016, a further comprehensive national evaluation was carried out. The purpose was to answer two main questions:

1. Do the mentoring programs help to ensure a good transition between initial teacher education and the professional work as a teacher, and to recruit, develop and retain skillful NQTs in schools and kindergartens?
2. Does mentor education provide the competence and skills needed for good practice as mentors?

The evaluation was based on document studies and case studies of selected municipalities that could document good results in their work with mentoring for NQTs. The case studies also targeted teacher education as providers of mentor education, kindergarten and school owners, leaders in kindergartens and schools, mentors and NQTs.

The second main question, regarding the quality of the mentoring programs, was approached through interviews with, and questionnaires for, teachers who had completed mentor education.

The results of the study were presented in the form of two reports (Rambøll, 2015, 2016). The first of these, from 2015, was mainly comprised of qualitative data, while the second also presented the results of the quantitative section with data obtained via questionnaires. As in earlier studies, the survey showed several positive effects of the measures:

- The NQTs who received mentoring felt more secure and more aware of the significance of their own competence.
 - They seemed more confident in sharing the competencies they had acquired during their teacher education with their more experienced colleagues.
 - The NQTs experienced mentoring as important for their development as teachers.
 - NQTs who participated in mentoring were more positive in their assessments of their first year as teachers.
 - The mentors' competence was useful in school and kindergarten development.
 - The mentor education offered new career paths for teachers.
- (Rambøll, 2015).

The survey aimed at the quality of mentor education showed that the students were very satisfied with the education, but that the programs were quite different in form and content. There were also differences between regions in terms of the extent of the education. In some regions, most students completed only the first half of the education (15 ECTS), as this was the minimum required for practice teachers, while in other regions mentors with 30 ECTS were most common.

However, the quantitative part of the survey (Rambøll, 2016) showed that about 40 % of NQTs still did not receive any formal mentoring. Furthermore, among the 60 % who had received mentoring, there were large variations in the scope, content, frequency, structure and quality of the mentoring programs. Nearly half of this group had received mentoring only once a month or less. The survey also showed that about 50 % of the mentors had no formal education in mentoring.

The results from the evaluation study on the extent and quality of mentoring were regarded as somewhat disappointing. The Union of Education in Norway's³ student organization, "Pedagogstudentene",⁴ was particularly active in its efforts to draw political attention to the matter. Excerpts from the debate in the Norwegian Parliament show that the organization's efforts were one of the reasons why the debate resulted in a unanimous decision, in spring 2017, to implement measures aimed at ensuring that all NQTs would be offered mentoring.⁵

The fourth milestone: Agreement on a comprehensive national program

The unanimous decision in the Norwegian Parliament in 2017 testifies to the political recognition of the importance of mentoring for NQTs. It can also be understood as a signal to the stakeholders that greater determination and results that are more positive are expected.

3 <https://www.utdanningsforbundet.no/om-utdanningsforbundet/english/>

4 <https://www.pedagogstudentene.no/>

5 <https://www.utdanningsnytt.no/arbeidsmiljo-laereryrket-skoleutvikling/na-blir-det-nasjonale-rammer-for-veiledning-av-nyutdannede-laerere/179812>

The group of stakeholders appointed in 2017 based much of its work on recent research on induction and mentoring, as well as the evaluation report from 2016. Representatives from the Ministry of Education and Research led work in the group. Teacher education participated with representatives from Universities Norway,⁶ which is a cooperative body for universities and university colleges offering teacher education in Norway. Their main concern was to establish a connection between the professional qualification that takes place in teacher education and the further professionalization that occurs within the profession.

The employers were represented by the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities⁷ -KS, which is an organization for all local governments in Norway, and by representatives from various private organizations. Teachers' unions were represented by the Union of Education in Norway, which is the largest teachers' union with about 180,000 members, the Norwegian Union of School Employees,⁸ the Association of School Leaders,⁹ and "Norsk Lektorlag",¹⁰ which is a union for university and college-educated lecturers and other academics with similar education. In addition, "Pedagogstudentene" was represented. The National Network for Mentoring of NQTs participated as an observer, giving research-based information and answering questions from the stakeholders in work on the agreement.

Completing a formal agreement proved to be demanding and took about one year. Although the stakeholders agreed with the main objective of the Norwegian Parliament, there was disagreement about how comprehensive the measures should be and how they should be financed. These issues were particularly important to the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities. They were also an issue for the Private Kindergartens' Associations,¹¹ which represent the owners of about half of the kindergartens in Norway. This is related to the fact that virtually all schools and kindergartens (private and municipal) in Norway are financed by government

6 <https://www.uhr.no/en/>

7 <https://www.ks.no/om-ks/ks-in-english/>

8 <https://skoleneslandsforbund.no/english/>

9 <https://www.skolelederforbundet.no/om-oss/in-english/>

10 <https://www.norsklektorlag.no/>

11 <https://www.pbl.no/>

grants and tax revenues. This funding is expected to cover expenses not only for kindergartens and schools, but also other municipal responsibilities ranging from road construction to centers for the elderly. This means that all municipal and county activities are subject to political priorities that require negotiations about the distribution of limited resources among a wide variety of recipients. Although the municipal and private owners at the national level committed themselves to the agreement, they knew it would still be challenging to follow up on the agreement locally.

The main obligation of the municipalities' interest organization (KS) is therefore to look after the interests of its member counties and local municipalities in the best possible way. This means that if Norwegian Government authorities impose new tasks on counties and municipalities, it is the role of KS to demand that this should be financed through increased government grants. Regarding induction and mentoring for NQTs it has, as mentioned, been an overriding principle that kindergarten and school owners must cover expenses from within their own budgets. This means that although KS as an organization, on a professional basis, is positive to mentoring NQTs, it is of little importance for an interest organization to assign tasks that will result in a significant increase in expenses for its members. In the final agreement this is expressed in the proviso that the scope and organization of the measures must be adapted to local conditions. This is also probably the most important reason for the large local variations in the quality and scope of mentoring, and for the fact that around 40 % of NQTs in 2016 were still without any formal mentoring program.

The teacher organizations, for their part, were concerned with the mentors being compensated for the responsibility and extra work they undertake, and that the NQTs are allocated time in their work plans for participating in mentoring.

Despite these obvious conflicts of interest, all the stakeholders with the exception of the Norwegian Union of School Employees¹² reached an agreement that was intended to "... contribute to the implementation of mentoring through anchoring in their own organization, implementation

12 The main reason was that the financial compensation of the employees was not sufficient as they perceived it.

of measures related to their own areas of responsibility and dialogue between the parties” (Kunnskapsdepartementet/Ministry of Education and Research, 2018b).

The national agreement¹³ included a section with concept clarifications related to the definition of key concepts, such as newly qualified teacher, qualified mentor and mentoring. Among other things, it states that a teacher in Norway is perceived as an NQT during the first two years of work after completing initial teacher education (Bjerkholt, 2013; Britton, Paine, Pimm, & Raizen, 2003; Jakhelln, 2011). A qualified mentor is required to have formal mentor education (30 ECTS) and a minimum of three years of professional experience as a teacher. The term mentoring is defined as “a planned, systematic and structured process that is carried out individually and in groups” (Kunnskapsdepartementet/Ministry of Education and Research, 2018b, p. 6).

The agreement between the stakeholders, furthermore, states that mentoring must have a frequency and scope that provides the basis for expecting that it will contribute significantly to learning and development for NQTs (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Parker, Ndoye, & Imig, 2009). This can be seen in relation to the results of the national evaluation in 2014–2016, which documented that there were large variations in the frequency and scope of mentoring, and that many mentors lacked formal qualifications. The report stated that this variation meant that they could not conclude that mentoring for NQTs always had a positive impact on the learning and development of the new teachers (Rambøll, 2016). This is the reason why the agreement underlines that mentoring should preferably be conducted by qualified mentors who are academically up to date, and that the mentor should, in principle, not be in a leadership relationship with the NQT. This was important to prevent that conflicting roles in any way might decrease mutual confidence and hamper the effect of mentoring.

The national agreement also states that mentoring should be based on research and experience-based knowledge. Furthermore, it is intended to establish a good connection between the professional qualification in

13 <https://www.nyutdannede.no/media/1240/veiledning-av-nyutdannede-nytilsatte-larere-i-barnehage-og-skole-6.pdf>

teacher education and further professional development in the profession (Mausethagen & Smeby, 2017). The agreement strongly advocates the importance of collaboration between teacher education, employers and teacher organizations.

In addition to the formal agreement, a digital guide¹⁴ providing examples and advice regarding how employers can follow up on the principles and obligations, has been compiled. The Directorate for Education and Training has, in collaboration with the National network for mentoring of newly qualified teachers, also developed new national frameworks for a combined further education in mentoring (30 ECTS). These frameworks are based on the national principles and are intended to establish a common mentoring education offered at the universities and university colleges. The mentoring education is at master's level and consists of a common basic module of 15 ECTS and a supplementary module of 15 ECTS with two alternatives. One is aimed at mentoring teacher students and NQTs, and the other focuses on colleague or process mentoring for quality development in kindergartens and schools. Teachers in schools' grade 1–10 can apply for scholarships or reduced reading time during the study period, which usually extends over one academic year.

The agreement is valid for the period 10.09.2018 until 31.07.2021. During this period, work on the implementation of the agreement will be followed up with an extensive national evaluation. A final report will be available in February 2021, well in advance of the end of the contract period.

Future challenges and opportunities

In the work to come, there are many challenges for the stakeholders related to following up the national agreement. These are linked to financial conditions, collaborative structures and the need to increase the number of qualified mentors.

14 <https://www.udir.no/kvalitet-og-kompetanse/veiledning-av-nyutdannede/hvordan-kan-det-gjennomfores/>

In recent years, teacher education in Norway for primary and secondary schools has undergone major reforms and is now a five-year master's degree program. These graduating teachers will have an education that in many ways differs from their colleagues. They have fewer subjects in their subject portfolio and can be expected to have a more research-based approach to teaching and learning than previous generations of teachers. The amount of practice within the program, however, is almost the same.

The kindergarten and school owners need to have knowledge about today's teacher education and what they can expect of the NQTs in order to follow up on the ambitious principles in the national agreement. This requires that kindergarten and school leaders have insight into what is emphasized in the new teacher education as a basis for following up the principles and facilitating mentoring in a way that both supports and challenges the NQTs. Mentoring should not only be perceived as support but must also highlight the fact that NQTs represent competence that can be of benefit to their colleagues and further school-based development (Olsen & Wølner, 2017).

As stated above, the question of who should fund induction and mentoring of NQTs, represents what we might call the Gordian knot in the Norwegian narrative. It is therefore very positive that the Norwegian Government, in the state budgets for 2019 and 2020, chose to allocate NOK 60 million and invite employers to apply for financial support for mentoring of NQTs in primary and secondary schools. However, in the case of NQTs in kindergartens and upper secondary schools, the Government has not provided such financial support.

Conclusions

This article addresses the research questions: What characterizes the different milestones in the history of induction and mentoring in Norway? Which stakeholders have been active partners in the policymaking, and how has this contributed to changing and developing the national program for induction and mentoring for NQTs in Norway?

The narrative of what characterizes the different milestones illustrates a chronological and political agreement line of facilitating induction and

mentoring for NQTs in Norway since 1998. It started with two projects aimed at kindergarten, primary and secondary school teachers. NQTs in upper secondary schools were included in 2004. The first national letter of intent between state authorities and employers' representatives was signed in 2009 (Kunnskapsdepartementet/Ministry of Education and Research & KS, 2009). This agreement was renewed in 2014. In 2018, an agreement was signed between the stakeholders aimed at ensuring that all NQTs in kindergartens, primary, secondary and upper-secondary schools would be offered mentoring during the first two years of work after completing initial teacher education.

Throughout the periods, state authorities represented by the Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate of Education and Training, have led and financed the part of the measures that the teacher education institutions have been responsible for. This applies primarily to the education of mentors and cooperation on the employer side. The National network for mentoring of newly qualified teachers has played a key role in the sharing of experiences and quality development of the national program since 2003. Representatives from the network have also carried out research and development projects in the field.

Induction and mentoring for NQTs in Norway has not been authorized by law or other formal regulations. Consequently, participation in the program is voluntary and is the responsibility of the local employers.

A comprehensive national evaluation conducted in the period from 2014–2016 showed that 40 % of NQTs were still not included in any form of formal mentoring, and that the support given to the remaining 60 %, in many cases was of varying quality and frequency. The evaluation also showed that there was a significant lack of mentors with formal competence for this role. This triggered a unanimous decision in the Norwegian Parliament which aimed at ensuring that all NQTs in kindergartens, primary, lower and upper secondary schools would be offered mentoring in the first two years of work after completing initial teacher education. Implementation of the measures related to the decision is ongoing and is being followed up by a comprehensive evaluation to measure the impact. The results of the evaluation are expected to be published in 2021.

As in most other countries, the purpose of induction and mentoring for NQTs has, to some extent, been financially motivated with a view to strengthening the recruitment to teacher education and retaining as many NQTs as possible in the profession. However, the measures in Norway have also, to a large extent, been justified based on research and experience. Mentoring is regarded as important in a national strategy for quality development and more learning for children and young people in kindergartens and schools. This is reflected in the national agreements concluded between the parties, in white papers and official reports. We also refer to the introductory article, where we discuss the strategy of OECD countries in this area.

The history of induction and mentoring in Norway is one of many examples where education, research and politics are intertwined. Politics is, by definition, about the premises of how limited financial resources can be managed in the best possible way. Which measures have the greatest impact can, in most cases, be difficult to document empirically. Therefore, decisions are often made more on a political rather than a scientific and research-basis.

The evaluation report expected to be published in 2021 will give us some indication of what effects the measures that were implemented after 2017 have had. This can be expected to generate a new discussion on the matter, both between the stakeholders and in the Norwegian Parliament.

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