



## **Cutting Edge Teacher Mentoring: From the University to K-12 Classrooms**

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### **Abstract**

Although there is a body of research that supports mentoring for novice teachers, most programs are just one year in length. The novice teachers gain survival skills, but rarely acquire the reflective thinking and lifelong learning that are necessary to increase elementary and secondary student achievement. Their novice year is a scary time when teachers take the reins of classrooms alone. It is with this vision and challenge in mind that the faculty and administrators in our school of education decided to provide support and guidance for our graduates as they initially entered the teaching profession. In 2012, we created an innovative three-year mentoring program for our teacher education graduates, based on the S.A.V.E Model [1]. A review of the literature showed that many programs focused on one model for mentoring that only took place during the first year of teaching. The one year programs had little, if any impact on student achievement, the development of reflective thinkers and improving the attrition of novice teachers for periods longer than five years. According to Ingersoll and Kralik [2] the epidemic of attrition for teachers has reached as high as a 40-50% rate within the first five years of their career. In the design of the S.A.V. E. model participants meet four times per year, during each of their first three years of teaching. School of Education administrators, faculty, and alumni that are seasoned teachers are chosen to serve as mentors for the novice teachers in S.A.V.E. In order to promote spontaneous communication an online website has been created to provide additional support and resources through this technology. During the first year, the session topics are suggested by the novice teachers based upon the issues they are encountering in their classrooms. The sessions provide information and speakers as well as promote sustained dialogue and active participation. In year two, participants develop portfolios and collect various artifacts such as a case study and the analysis of student learning. They also suggest topics for discussion at the sessions. At the end of year two, the novice teachers choose an area to research and complete an action research study in their classrooms during year three of their teaching. The year-three novice teachers attend sessions as well and dialogue about their projects. A research finding presentation is held at the conclusion of year three. The participants provided feedback through interviews, reflection, and surveys. In addition to the favorable ratings by the novice teachers, the seasoned teachers also felt that they benefitted from their participation and interaction with the university faculty and administrators. Implications of this study for higher education programs will be further explored and discussed.

### **References**

- [1] Corriero, J., & Romeo, L. (2011). When mentoring is not enough: A multi-year induction program. In A. Cohan & A. Honigsfeld (Eds.), *Breaking the Mold of Pre-service and In-service Teacher Education*. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield Education.
- [2] Ingersoll, R. & Kralik, J. (2004). The impact of mentoring on teacher retention: What the research says. Research Review. Retrieved from <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/50/36/5036.htm>