

Equity in School Mentoring and Induction: An eBook Review

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Introduction

Author Carol A. Mullen, Ph.D., brings professional educators and leaders an ethical framework grounded in research that is accessible to practitioners responsible for induction processes, ongoing mentorships, and the school ecosystem. Each of the five chapters contained within *Equity in School Mentoring and Induction* is filled with ideas, strategies, and activities for promoting support, accessibility, collaboration, and equity (SACE). Throughout this spanned 3-years of research and writing, Mullen brings foundational knowledge about school mentoring and induction processes, the history of mentoring in general and schools in particular, pathways supported by theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and her passionate rationale as momentum for justifiable change. Mullen presents “cutting-edge” research with a charge for readers to bring an equitable mentoring dynamic into schools, so all become engaged in the revitalization or “(re)design” (p. 3) and implementation of just policies and the creation of nurturing spaces where all within flourish.

Discussion

In Chapter 1, Mullen presents the organization of the chapter and elements of the book, and addresses “the crucial, interconnected issues of equity, teacher retention, and mentoring programs in education” (p. 2). “Real-world cases and analysis” with practical strategies and suggestions that include professional development and learning (PDL), peer networks, and access to evidence-based mentoring practices are among Mullen’s “tangible solutions” that promote equity in schools (p. 2).

Chapter 2 introduces “equity” into the reimagined support-accessibility-collaboration (SAC) model. Key concepts of accessibility, collaboration, equity, induction, mentoring, policy, and support are discussed with accessible referenced work from notable authors and researchers. A variety of mentoring and induction frameworks are featured along with “design features of supportive architecture” for teacher mentoring (p. 13), the “new teacher center” mentoring/induction quality practices standards (p. 15), and “policies and practices” that uphold mentor assessment and evaluation (p. 22-23).

In Chapter 3, SACE is discussed to illuminate “equity’s role in transforming newcomer PDL” (p. 31). Conversation starters and reflective activities are also included to inspire learning and the drive to act. The importance of the

school leader, as the one who notably provides the equity-driven mentoring leadership in schools and districts, is provided. Sections in Chapter 3 are devoted to topics such as “How to structure effective mentoring practices” that includes the elements of structure, engagement, opportunities, and evaluation (p. 42), and “Making Newcomer Mentoring/Induction Work” through high-impact strategies for educator identity, supports, guidance, and continuous support through policies and practices (p. 43). Several strategies for equity are suggested and include practicing “a culture of microaffirmations” (in Mullen, p. 48) and “folding mentoring into equity audits” (p. 52-54).

Chapter 4 brings “Cases of New Teaching Mentoring in Schools” with descriptive analyses and tables. The chapter concludes with conversation starters and reflective activities, which can be used as presented or prompts that can be revised and adapted for other settings, which could include teacher or leader preparation programs and internships, (p. 97).

Chapter 5, provides the conclusion that offers encouragement for education leaders to champion SACE-driven “programs and scholars” and build on SACE as “a direction for future research, policy development, and program improvement” (p. 101). Throughout this “book” Mullen provides well supported content from researchers on decoupling mentoring from formal evaluation processes, diversifying the teacher and leader pipelines for “Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color” as an educational goal, and adoption of a “social justice leadership design” in universities. The SACE checklist is available to use as a rating system for reflection or program assessment in relation to the various components.

Conclusion

This compelling book is grounded in theory, supported by research, and infused with opportunities for reflection, discussion, evaluation, and action. This short volume,, filled with value-added bonuses and wise nuggets, offers a timely message for mentoring and induction practices in education through the lens of justice as a powerful tool for promoting equity. Mullen suggests the intended audience includes “a wide, global audience of school/district leaders, teachers, mentors, mentoring program developers, professional learning directors, university researchers, and policymakers” (p. 5). As an educator, I must wholeheartedly agree!