

# A pathway to mentoring

In partnership with



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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# Foreword

**A** *Pathway to Mentoring* is intended to assist the Provincial Steering Committees, the School Districts as well as various officials that will be involved in the Beginning Teacher Induction Programme to development and implement an effective mentoring system for the beginning teacher. The mentoring of beginning teachers is a critical component of the induction of new teachers into the profession. It makes necessary connections between theory and practice, supports the professional and personal growth of beginning teachers and provides professional development opportunities for the mentor teacher.

This quick-reference guide will serve to provide a practical resource for the establishment and implementation of a mentoring system for beginning teachers as well as a resource for sustaining the mentoring system.



# Introduction

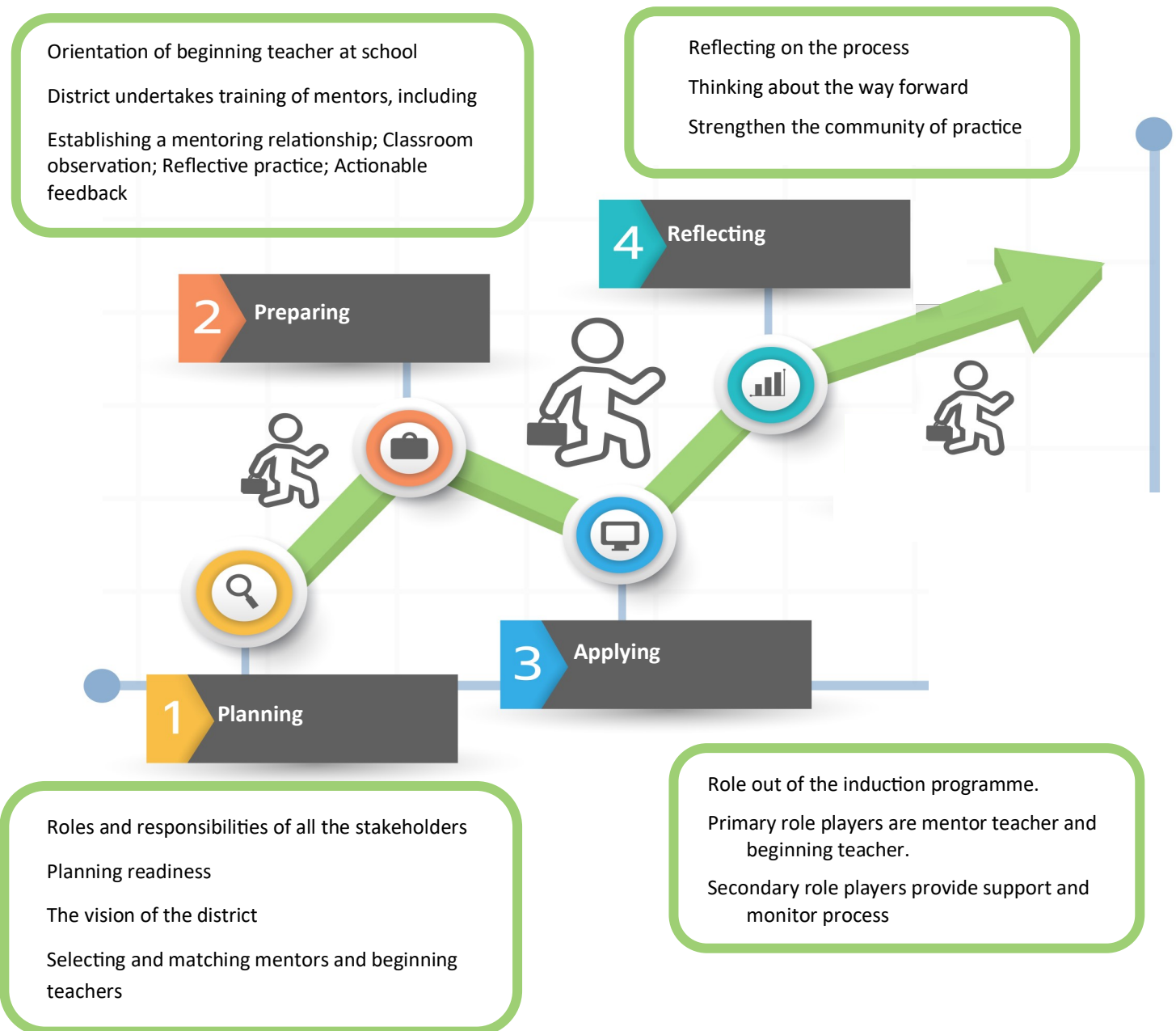
**G**etting to know the new school and its structures, learning about the policies and procedures, implementing the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, planning units of lessons, engaging learners, using a variety of teaching strategies, dealing with classroom management and discipline, assisting students who have specific needs, coordinating extracurricular activities and being accountable to the various stakeholders of education are just a few of the jobs teachers do. Many of these duties are difficult for the most experienced professional, so one wonders how beginning teachers survive, since they are expected, on their very first day of employment, to do the job of a seasoned veteran.

Mentoring is a nurturing process, in which a more skilled person, serving as a role model, coaches, encourages, counsels, guides and supports a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and the beginning teacher.



# Induction Pathway

The purpose of the *Beginning Teacher Induction Pathway* (cf. Figure 1) is to ensure that the *Teacher Induction Programme* and the induction process unfolds in a coordinated and coherent manner to ensure successful completion. The steps along the pathway are meant to be flexible and adaptable to a district's context and specific needs.



# The Planning Step

## Roles and responsibilities

### The provincial steering committee

(e.g., Director, provincial / district officials, SACE, VVOB)

Overseeing implementation and monitoring of the Induction Programme.

Discussing and taking action, if required, on reports by circuit managers.

Submitting portfolio of evidence reports to SACE?

### District office: Circuit manager

Determine whether the district is ready to implement the Teacher Induction Programme.

Communicate the vision of the Teacher Induction Programme to all principals.

Provide support to principals and school management teams.

Encourage school to create an environment which will give the Teacher Induction Programme every chance of success.

Report on the progress of the Induction Programme and the mentoring system at provincial steering committee meetings.

### Subject Advisors/ Curriculum Advisors

Co-ordinate and conduct mentor training

Provide support to the mentor teachers and new teachers

Request that mentor teachers and beginning teachers be provided with dedicated time for induction activities.

Identify and eliminate barriers to the successful implementation of the programme.

### School: Principal

Identify mentor teachers to undergo training for the Induction Programme

Respects the confidential relationship of the mentor teacher and the beginning teacher.

### School Management Team

Provide peer support to mentor and beginning teacher

Look at the workload of the mentor and beginning teacher.

Facilitate the use of time and resources

Monitors the Teacher Induction Programme activities in the school .

Ensure that the beginning teacher uploads the final professional development portfolio timeously.

### Mentor teacher

Continue to teach while mentoring and orientate the beginning teachers

Understand the typical needs and challenges of the new teacher

Develop and use a variety of strategies to assist the new teacher

Prepare themselves for effective one-on-one consultation

Initially focus their efforts in areas known to be difficult for beginning teachers

Make the accumulated wisdom of other experienced teachers accessible to beginning teachers

Develop strategies for giving acceptance and support for the beginning teacher within the school context.

Model effective practice

Observe and provide feedback to the beginning teacher in the classroom

Offer support in the form of advice and guidance related to personal, social and professional spheres.

Identify the professional development needs of new teacher

Maintain a relationship with the beginning teacher consistent with SACE Code of Professional Conduct.



# The Planning Step

## Roles and responsibilities

### The beginner teacher

Participate in the Teacher Induction Programme.

Be open to observations and feedback offered by the mentor and other professionals and experts.

Participate in professional development activities identified during the Teacher Induction Programme.

Be prepared to engage in a self-reflective teaching practice.

Are committed to an ethos of collegial reflective practice.

Complete and submit a Professional Development Portfolio as part of the successful completion of the Teacher Induction Programme.

## Planning for readiness

**TAKE NOTE** The following checklists can be used by the District Office as well as the participating Schools to determine their readiness for the Teacher Induction Programme.

### Checklist 1: School readiness

Tasks	Completed	Not-Completed	Action steps to ensure completion	Person responsible for action step
Used criteria to identify appropriate mentor teachers				
Communicated names of mentor teachers and beginning teachers to circuit manager				
Principal and SMT familiar with their roles and responsibilities				
Mentor teacher and Beginning teacher support structures and resources in place				



## Checklist 2: District and circuit office readiness

Tasks	Completed	Not-Completed	Action steps to ensure completion	Person responsible for action step
List of mentor teachers and beginning teacher names received from schools				
Mentor training materials prepared				
Principal and School Management Team support for Induction in place: What support will be provided? How will support be provided (i.e., via email, face-to-face, via technology, etc.)? By whom will support be provided?				
Who will monitor that the Teacher Induction Programme is on schedule at the schools?				
How will the monitoring of the programme be done (e.g., via Whatsapp, Skype, etc.)?				
Who will coordinate the submission of professional development portfolios to the district/circuit office?				
Submission/assessment/signing off of portfolios to Provincial Steering Committee?				



## NOTES

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# Planning for readiness

Once the district is ready for implementation, the next task will be to reflect on and create a vision for what should be accomplished through the induction process. The following guiding questions can be used to facilitate reflection on a vision for the district. Having a clearly defined vision can serve as a starting point for discussion during the mentor teacher training session.



1

What do you see as the greatest benefit to your district and the teachers participating in the induction process?

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How can you build on your strengths, weaknesses, and existing resources to ensure successful implementation?

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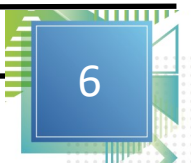
Summarise your vision for implementing the Beginning Teacher Induction programme in your district in one paragraph

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# Selecting & Matching

## TAKE NOTE

In this section guidelines/criteria for selecting mentor teachers as well as consideration for matching mentor teachers and beginning teachers are presented.

### Guidelines/Criteria for selecting mentor teachers

The principal or school management team can use the following guidelines to select mentor teachers:

- A minimum of three years teaching experience
- Ability to use learner data, both formal and informal, to design and adapt instruction.
- Ability to use, model and explain evidence-based principles and methods in relevant content areas.
- Ability to apply theory to practice
- Commitment and ability to support the growth and development of beginning teachers.
- Commitment to self-reflection and ongoing professional development and growth.
- Interpersonal skills, including communication and relationship building..
- Ability to provide balanced, non-judgmental and constructive feedback to beginning teachers.

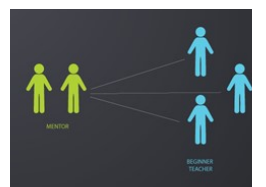
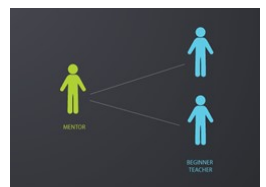
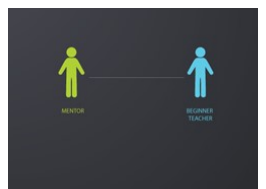


### Guidelines/Criteria for matching mentor teachers to beginning teachers

There are no set on the number of mentors and beginning teachers that can participate in the induction process. This section provides some guidelines for the **Principal and/or School Management Team** to consider and which can also assist district officials in terms of how and why certain individuals were selected to function as mentor teachers.

Although both large teams and small teams have their benefits, the number of participants you select should ultimately be based on the number of strong mentor–beginning teacher matches that you have and believe you can support. Just as having the proper conditions in place is critical for the success of the induction process, having the right participants in the right roles can affect whether or not the induction process works.

As important as understanding which experienced teachers will make good mentors is identifying which mentor will be the best match for each beginning teacher. The most successful matches are those in which the mentor and beginning teacher teach similar content areas and grade levels, share similar involvement or interest in evidence-based instruction, are available to meet at similar times and locations, and have complementary needs and strengths.



# The Preparing Step

**D**uring this step, the mentor teacher will assist with the orientation the beginning teacher at school. In addition, the District and Circuit Office (e.g., subject advisors, curriculum advisors or individuals identified by the district office) will undertake the training of the mentor teachers at the identified schools. An outline of core aspects that will be included during the training include:

- Establishing a mentoring relationship
- Classroom observation
- Reflective practice
- Actionable feedback (cf. A Guide To Training Mentors)

# The Applying Step

**D**uring this step the mentor teacher and beginning teacher(s) begin the Beginning Teacher Induction Programme. The role-players during this step are primarily the mentor teacher and the beginning teacher. The role of the subject/curriculum advisors is to provide any support or remove barriers that the mentor teachers or beginning teachers may have; this takes place via the principal and school management team. The district office should communicate the time frame of the Induction Programme and the dates of submission of the professional development portfolio.



## NOTES

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# The Reflecting Step

**T**he final step along the Beginning Teacher Induction Pathway is the time for final reflection about the changes that have occurred as a result of induction and about the next steps going forward. It involves the provincial steering committee conferring with the district/circuit office about what has been achieved and what new needs have emerged.

This step is also the point where the beginning teacher shares their learning with others in a community of practice within the school. Having to synthesise, summarise, and articulate what's been learned and how those new ideas have been put into practice is an important part of the learning process. It is an opportunity for the beginning teacher to describe their thinking and hear others discuss their own ideas, bringing them into a community of professional learning that will continue beyond induction.

By taking the time to reflect on the new knowledge and skills attained and being purposeful about how the knowledge and skills are shared, it is possible to increase the likelihood of sustaining the use of the knowledge and skills beyond the induction process of professional development and scaling up what was learned so that it becomes part of the Instructional toolkit of all participants in the Beginning Teacher Induction Programme.



## NOTES

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True teachers are those who use themselves as bridges over which they invite their students to cross; then, having facilitated their crossing, joyfully collapse, encouraging them to create their own.

*Nikos Kazantzakis*

