

MENTORS THAT TRANSFORM: EXPLORING TRAINING NEEDS IN TEACHER INDUCTION

*Mentores que transforman: Explorando las necesidades
de formación en la inducción docente*

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Abstract

This study examines the training needs of mentors in induction programs in the Dominican Republic, on the premise that their training influences the integration and professional development of beginning teachers. A validated questionnaire was administered to 508 mentors and school leaders. The analysis included descriptive statistics, factor analysis, reliability testing, and nonparametric tests. Results indicate that mentors perceive shortcomings in adapting training to beginning teachers, handling extraordinary situations, and administrative knowledge. Significant differences emerged according to professional role and prior mentoring experience. The study concludes that it is essential to design training programs that integrate pedagogical and organizational competencies to achieve a more effective induction process aligned with the Dominican educational context.

Keywords: beginning teachers, induction programs, mentors, training needs.

Resumen

El presente estudio analiza las necesidades formativas de mentores en programas de inducción de República Dominicana, a partir de la premisa de que su formación influye en la integración y desarrollo profesional de docentes principiantes. Se administró un cuestionario validado a 508 mentores y responsables de centros educativos. El análisis incluyó datos estadísticos descriptivos, análisis factorial, pruebas de fiabilidad y exámenes no paramétricos. Los resultados indican que los mentores perciben carencias para adaptar la formación a docentes noveles, en el manejo de situaciones extraordinarias y conocimiento administrativo. Se observaron diferencias significativas según el rol profesional y la experiencia previa en mentoría. Se concluye que resulta imprescindible diseñar programas formativos que integren competencias pedagógicas y organizacionales para lograr un proceso de inducción más eficaz y acorde con el contexto educativo dominicano.

Palabras clave: mentores, necesidades de formación, profesores principiantes, programas de inducción.

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1 | Introduction

The quality of teaching is directly linked to the quality of the training received by teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). It is already known that teachers go through different stages in their process of learning to teach: initial training, induction, and continuing professional development (Vaillant & Marcelo, 2015). Of these three stages, the induction period is surely the one that has the greatest effect on teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). As Feiman-Nemser (2008) notes, beginning teachers have to survive a complex situation that is both familiar and unfamiliar. To ensure this process fosters an attitude of openness and confidence in teachers' abilities, educational systems in many countries have developed more or less formal induction programs.

According to the latest Teaching and Learning International Survey (OECD, 2019), the availability of induction programs for newly hired teachers is highly irregular across different educational systems, and they tend to be informal. The report indicates that in countries and economies of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 13% of schools do not offer teachers access to any type of induction (this percentage varies by country). In Latin America in particular, induction programs have been scarce and lack continuity. Only a few countries, such as Chile, Peru, and the Dominican Republic, have implemented induction programs based on official and mandatory regulations (Marcelo, 2022).

Formally established induction programs incorporate a wide variety of training activities aimed at orienting and integrating the beginning teacher into the school's dynamics and the teaching profession: courses and workshops, school visits, teacher networks, and primarily, the mentor figure. The role of the mentor has been considered one of the most important components of induction programs (Hudson, 2013). A mentor is understood as an experienced teacher and trainer who shares their knowledge and supports someone with less experience. The mentor can play multiple roles by providing support, integrating the new teacher into their work environment, and guiding their professional development (Goerisch et al., 2019).

This article analyzes the training needs of mentors in teacher induction programs in the Dominican Republic, a fundamental process for the integration and professional development of new teachers. It explores how mentors perceive gaps in their training and determines significant differences based on professional role and gender, using a questionnaire applied to 508 participants. This process allows for the proposal of recommendations to strengthen the quality of induction through

training programs that address pedagogical and organizational aspects, thus ensuring effective mentorship that improves educational quality and teacher retention in their first years.

2 | Literature review

The integration of beginning teachers into educational practice has been a recurrent topic in research in this area for decades. The classic studies by Veenman (1984) and Vonk (1983) identified common problems such as discipline, motivation, and relationships with colleagues and families, issues that remain relevant today (Avalos, 2016; Correa et al., 2015; Mosley & McCarthy, 2023).

In Latin America, research such as that by Imbernón (2017), López & Marcelo (2021), and Marcelo & Vaillant (2017) has highlighted the importance of induction and mentoring in contexts like Chile, Uruguay, and the Dominican Republic, particularly the need for stable and sustained policies. Induction programs are understood as a set of policies and resources that support the novice teacher (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The TALIS report (OECD, 2019) confirms that induction is key to job satisfaction and retention in the profession. However, its implementation is uneven across countries and is still limited in much of Latin America (Marcelo & Vaillant, 2018). The benefits of mentoring are widely recognized: improved educational practice, emotional support, and professional development for both novices and mentors (Ewing, 2021; Richter et al., 2011; Trevethan & Sandretto, 2017; van Ginkel et al., 2015).

Other studies also emphasize that mentoring helps reduce the stress experienced by teachers in their first years (Harmsen et al., 2019; Mosley & McCarthy, 2023) and strengthens the construction of a specific professional identity for the mentor (Schatz-Oppenheimer & Goldenberg, 2024). Various international comparisons show that, although models vary, the mentor figure is central to initial support (Shanks et al., 2022). In this sense, recent literature highlights that the mentor's role requires specialized and continuous training to ensure effective support that combines pedagogical, emotional, and institutional guidance (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Langdon et al., 2019). This argument is particularly relevant in Latin American systems, where induction faces challenges of sustainability and contextual adaptation.

To address these problems and facilitate practical learning, educational systems have implemented induction programs. According to

Ingersoll & Strong (2011), induction is defined as a set of educational policies, resources, and professional development opportunities aimed at offering orientation and support to new teachers. The TALIS report (OECD, 2019) —which analyzes teacher training, teaching, and school leadership— underscores the relevance of induction programs. It states that, “the induction of beginning teachers is essential because it contributes to improving the quality of teaching and the job satisfaction of newly-arriving teachers” (p. 141). However, this policy is not applied uniformly across all OECD countries. The report notes that the city of Shanghai has the highest percentage of beginning primary school teachers who have a mentor or guide (70%), followed by Kazakhstan at 60%. Overall, the average for members of this organization stands at 22%. This evidences that, despite extensive documentation on the benefits of induction programs (Howe, 2006; Nasser-Abu Alhija & Fresko, 2010; Orland-Barak, 2014), their implementation is not yet a common practice in all educational contexts or for all teachers.

Mentors not only guide teachers in joint planning and classroom observation but also contribute to their professional development through continuous feedback and the design of improvement plans. According to Richter et al. (2011), mentoring has a positive effect on teacher efficacy, commitment, and well-being, which promotes the improvement of educational practice. Furthermore, van Ginkel et al. (2015) classified mentoring activities into four main categories: providing emotional and psychosocial support, facilitating the construction of practical knowledge, creating a conducive learning environment, and modifying pedagogical strategies.

In various countries, the implementation of induction programs has developed from public policies that emphasize the importance of providing teachers who are beginning their careers with specialized training aligned with the needs of educational systems. A number of studies have evidenced the effectiveness of these programs. Ingersoll & Strong (2011), in their review of research, concluded that they have a positive effect on teachers’ commitment, retention in the profession, improvement of educational practices, and student learning outcomes. Similarly, Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) found that induction significantly influences novice teachers’ decision to continue or leave the profession, highlighting that direct support from school leadership, mentoring, and participation in seminars are determining factors. Furthermore, Thomas et al. (2019) stress that mentoring and the guidance of beginning colleagues are crucial elements for the professional development of new teachers.

On the other hand, Harmsen et al. (2019) noted that the reduction of stress in beginning teachers is another benefit of induction, indicating

that their dissatisfaction tends to increase in the second year of service, a point when most induction programs typically have concluded. According to van Ginkel et al. (2015), mentors must possess certain personal attributes that facilitate their training work: being supportive of the beginner, feeling comfortable talking about teaching practices, and listening carefully. Secondly, the mentor must familiarize the novice with the requirements of the educational system they are joining: the objectives, policies, and curricula required by the educational system. Thirdly, they must possess pedagogical knowledge to help beginning teachers with lesson planning, the arrangement of teaching strategies, classroom management, etc. Fourthly, mentors perform modeling functions that show the beginning teacher the do's and don'ts of effective teaching, classroom management, and practical activities. Finally, mentors must provide formative and motivational feedback to novice teachers.

Mentors contribute positively to teacher professional development (Ewing, 2021). The benefits of mentoring are widely recognized and include reciprocal learning, resilience, career development, improved problem-solving, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Fu et al., 2019). However, its benefits are perceived not only by newly hired teachers but also by the mentors themselves (Trevethan & Sandretto, 2017). By performing the mentoring function, experienced teachers acquire new pedagogical orientations and perspectives that can be provided by the beginners, while also supporting reflective processes as they must verbalize and justify their actions with respect to the beginner. Mentoring plays an important role for the beginning teacher, not only during their first days but throughout their first years (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

However, to perform their function, mentors' own teaching experience is not enough. Specific training is required to develop it. From the perspective of Aspfors & Fransson (2015), a well-trained mentor not only offers effective guidance but also models teaching practices that promote critical reflection and professional growth. This specialized training allows the mentor to identify and address the individual needs of beginners, contributing to their long-term success. Their continuing education allows them to stay updated with best practices and pedagogical approaches. As Langdon et al. (2019) point out, mentors who participate in professional development programs are better equipped to guide new teachers in a constantly changing educational environment. This not only benefits beginning teachers but also strengthens the overall quality of the educational system by ensuring that mentors can offer the most relevant and effective support.

In this vein, Schatz-Opppenheimer & Goldenberg (2024) analyzed how mentoring benefits beginners and contributes to the professional

development of the mentors themselves. They stress the importance of implementing training programs that integrate theory and practice, as this allows them to build a specific professional identity as mentors, differentiated from their role as teachers. In the Dominican Republic, induction is mandatory and is a state mandate stipulated in General Education Law 66-97, the Teacher Statute Regulation, Law 41-08 on Public Function, as well as the National Pact for Educational Reform and the 2030 Development Strategy. The Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic has considered the mentor a fundamental element for the implementation of an induction process, because the information derived from the accompanying process helps to improve the personal, professional development, and teaching practice of the beginner. This is why mentors are subject to evaluations that prioritize their experience, continuing education, and basic skills in handling information and communication technologies (ICT).

This study addresses two research problems focused on analyzing the training of mentors within induction programs for newly hired teachers. The first problem examines the training needs presented by those who serve as mentors, with the objective of identifying the areas that require greater support or professional development. The second analyzes whether these needs vary significantly based on the tutors' previous experience in similar tasks, among those who participated in the study.

3 | Method

The study was framed within a quantitative approach, with a non-experimental, descriptive, and cross-sectional design. The survey technique was employed using a validated questionnaire to collect data, aimed at identifying perceived training needs within the context of teacher induction. This design allowed for the analysis of the perceptions of a large group of participants, without manipulation of variables, thereby ensuring an objective description of the situation investigated.

The sample consisted of 508 teachers from the Dominican Republic, with diverse educational roles. Of the total participants, 81.7% were women and 18.3% were men, with the largest age representation between 40 and 49 years (49.8%), followed by participants over 50 years old (32.6%). Regarding teaching experience, the largest group had accumulated 16 to 20 years of service (25.2%), followed by those with 11 to 15 years (23.2%). The respondents primarily held educational management positions: 44.2% acted as pedagogical coordinator, 34.3% as district

technician, and 18.6% as school principal. These professionals came from both primary and secondary schools across the 18 educational regions of the country, which provides heterogeneity and geographical representativeness to the sample. It is noteworthy that the majority of participants (79.1%) had previous experience in the role of tutor or mentor within the National Induction Program: 53.1% had served in this capacity for at least one year, 16.3% for three years, and 9.6% for five years or more. Only 20.9% of the respondents had not served as a tutor for beginning teachers, which allowed for contrasting perceptions between those with and without experience.

For data collection, a structured, self-developed questionnaire was used, designed specifically for this study. The instrument was organized into two main sections. The first gathered sociodemographic and professional information from the participants, integrating nominal variables such as sex, age, years of experience, and position, with the aim of characterizing the sample.

The second section incorporated two ordinal Likert-type scales designed to measure the perceived training needs of the respondents. One of the scales evaluated aspects related to the National Induction Program, such as knowledge of its structure, phases, and administrative procedures. The other scale focused on needs associated with the performance of the mentor role, which included pedagogical support strategies, adaptation of teaching to the individual characteristics of novice teachers, and management of extraordinary situations, such as cases of indiscipline or school bullying. Each item on both scales was scored using a 4-point scale, where 1 indicated “no need” and 4 indicated “high need.” Thus, higher scores reflect a greater level of perceived training need.

The construction of the scales was based on the theoretical synthesis proposed by Strom et al. (2018), concerning the challenges faced by beginning teachers. Based on this conceptual foundation, four dimensions were defined for the item development: a) personal, which considers the teacher’s previous experiences, concerns, and initial learning; b) didactic, focused on pedagogical competence and classroom teaching; c) institutional, related to the novice teacher’s integration into school life (interaction with colleagues, school management, relationship with families and the community); and d) system, linked to aspects of the educational system and the operation of the National Induction Program.

Before its final application, the questionnaire was subjected to a validation and reliability analysis process. First, the internal consistency of the scales was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, obtaining values

of .932 for the induction program scale and .998 for the tutor role scale, indicating very high reliability for both measures.

In addition, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted, using the principal components method, to examine the construct validity of the training needs scale. The results indicated a KMO index of .982 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity (χ^2 , $p < .01$), confirming the suitability of the data for factorization. All items converged into a single main factor, interpreted as the overall level of mentor training needs, which supports the internal validity of the instrument.

Given that no substantial improvements in reliability were observed by eliminating any item, all original items were retained. Collectively, these procedures ensure the relevance, reliability, and validity of the measurements obtained through the questionnaire.

Perceived training needs constitute the central variable of the study. Conceptually, they are defined as the self-identified deficits or gaps in knowledge, skills, and competencies that mentors believe require strengthening to effectively fulfill their function of supporting beginning teachers within the framework of the National Induction Program. Operationally, these training needs were measured through the two Likert scales described previously; for each participant, a set of scores was provided that reflects the degree of perceived need in different evaluated areas. A higher average value on these scales indicates that the participant perceives a greater need for training in that evaluated dimension. Additionally, several classification variables were considered for analytical purposes.

Among the variables analyzed, the participant's professional role within the educational system (categories: pedagogical coordinator, district technician, or school principal) was highlighted, as was their prior experience as a mentor in induction programs (e.g., whether or not they had tutored novice teachers, and if so, for how many years). These variables allowed for the comparison of perceived training needs between subgroups, while examining whether factors such as the position held or mentoring experience significantly impacted the perceptions of training needs. All variables were clearly defined before the analysis: for example, having served as a tutor was defined binarily (yes/no, according to the teacher's response about their participation in the National Induction Program), while professional role was recorded according to the declared position at the school or educational level (from the aforementioned options). This explicit definition and differentiation of variables ensures transparency regarding how the data were segmented and analyzed, facilitating the evaluation of the relevance of the obtained results.

The data collection procedure was carried out in a standardized manner for all participants. First, the questionnaire was implemented in a digital (online) format to facilitate its distribution and geographical reach. The invitation to participate in the survey was sent via email to teachers included in the databases of previous cohorts of the National Induction Program, provided by the corresponding educational authorities. Furthermore, the link to the questionnaire was disseminated through teacher communication groups (e.g., WhatsApp groups) with the aim of broadening coverage and encouraging participation. The invitation message explained the objectives of the study and provided clear instructions for completing the questionnaire, estimating a reasonable time for its completion. Data collection took place during the months of May and June 2024, with the online form enabled for a sufficient period to receive the highest possible number of responses. During this time, periodic, respectful, and spaced reminders were sent to incentivize participation without exerting undue pressure. At the close of the field phase, the responses were downloaded from the electronic survey system, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Once collected, the data were cleaned to eliminate possible incomplete or invalid records, ensuring the integrity of the dataset. The analysis then proceeded with specialized statistical software (e.g., SPSS). First, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequency distributions) were calculated for each item and for the global scale scores, with the purpose of identifying general trends and the areas of greatest or least perceived training need. Concurrently, as described in the instrument section, the internal reliability of the scales was verified using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and the dimensional structure of the training needs was explored through an exploratory factor analysis, results already presented that supported the unidimensionality of the measured construct. Given that the data did not meet the assumptions of normality, non-parametric tests were used for group comparisons. In particular, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed to compare perceptions between those who had or had not served as mentors. In all cases, a significance level of $p < .05$ was adopted.

4 | Results

The analysis of training needs related to the National Induction Program (NIP) shows that mentors prioritize administrative and documentation management, followed by handling extraordinary situations and adapting to the individual needs of novice teachers. Table 1 provides

a comparison of these means. The results consistently highlight that mentorship requires not only pedagogical knowledge but also a mastery of administrative processes and the ability to respond to contingencies.

Table 1 | Mentor Training Needs Regarding the National Induction Program. Mean and Standard Deviation of Each Item

Items	Mean	Standard deviation
Knowing how the assigned induction program for new teachers is organized in terms of purpose, structure, and operation.	2.3622	.98445
Knowing how the assigned induction program for new teachers is organized in terms of phases and tasks.	2.4252	.96503
Knowing about the competencies to be acquired by new teachers and the content proposed in the National Induction Program.	2.5315	.98959
Knowing how to adjust the training proposal of the National Induction Program to the specific training needs of the assigned new teachers.	2.5965	.92763
Establishing coordination relationships with the university personnel responsible for the National Induction Program.	2.5157	.94928
Knowing the procedures, reports, and records required of me as a mentor of new teachers.	2.6516	.95802
Knowing how to act in case of extraordinary situations related to the assigned new teachers.	2.628	.95323

Intermediate scores (2.51–2.53) relate to institutional coordination and understanding the competencies to be developed. Although these values do not reach the threshold of highest urgency, their proximity to the midpoint shows that mentors need to strengthen communication with program managers. Finally, the items related to the NIP's structure and phases register the lowest means (2.36–2.43). This result implies that the program's overall architecture is perceived as sufficiently known or, at least, does not constitute the main barrier to mentoring performance.

From a professional development perspective, the mentor primarily requires tools for competent action in practice: clear protocols, decision-making criteria in critical situations, and strategies to adjust induction to diverse teacher profiles. Such a pragmatic orientation aligns with previous studies that emphasize the importance of administrative management

and efficacy in the face of contingencies as key factors in the quality of initial mentorship.

The relative homogeneity of the standard deviations ($\approx .95$) indicates a moderate consensus among mentors, suggesting that the identified needs do not correspond to specific subgroups but rather to shared deficiencies. Therefore, we can propose that training activities should be structured around three complementary axes: a) documentary and regulatory training to ensure compliance with institutional requirements; b) intervention protocols for extraordinary incidents, with special attention to mediation and prevention; and c) pedagogical differentiation methodologies that allow for modulating the program according to the novice teachers' trajectories, experiences, and goals.

Regarding the performance of the mentor role, as shown in Table 2, the results point to competencies related to innovation, methodological updating, and the use of digital resources as priorities. These data describe a cohort that aspires to play a proactive role, capable of guiding novice teachers toward contemporary practices based on experimentation and the intelligent use of technology.

Table 2 | Mean and Standard Deviation of Mentor Training Needs Items

Items	Mean	Standard deviation
Promoting the design of innovation projects, action plans, educational projects, etc., among new teachers.	2.563	.99603
Knowing updated didactic techniques, strategies, and resources that allow me to expand the repertoire to offer to the new teacher.	2.561	.93276
Knowing digital resources that can be incorporated into teaching to recommend to assigned new teachers.	2.5433	.90151
Supporting new teachers in improving evaluation processes, instruments, and ethical aspects of their teaching practice.	2.5197	1.00962
Helping the new teacher identify situations of school harassment or bullying both inside and outside the classroom.	2.5118	.96989
Informing the new teacher about different methodological strategies suitable for classroom diversity.	2.4823	1.00181
Promoting better understanding in new teachers of the personal characteristics and orientations of current adolescents in schools.	2.4331	.98181

(Continuation)

Items	Mean	Standard deviation
Supporting the new teacher in understanding and resolving discipline problems that may arise in the classroom.	2.4291	1.06259
Knowing how to foster in the new teacher knowledge about the school, organization, structure, leadership, detecting school and classroom climate and culture, school organization, etc.	2.4213	1.00477
Knowing how to inform new teachers about current curricular guidelines.	2.3839	1.01677
Generating commitment to continuous professional development required of all teachers in new teachers.	2.372	1.0812
Knowing how to support the new teacher in establishing positive relationships with the rest of the school staff, the management team, other educational agents, etc.	2.3642	1.02207
Raising awareness among new teachers about the need to make teaching planning flexible to address classroom diversity.	2.3583	1.0366
Evaluating the teaching capacity of new teachers based on evidence and data.	2.3445	1.02312
Promoting professional autonomy and decision-making capacity in new teachers.	2.3445	1.046
Knowing how to foster ethical professional behavior in the new teacher and offering ways and resources for the creation and maintenance of stable commitment (social, professional, and institutional).	2.3346	1.02927
Promoting a favorable attitude towards the mentoring function and support for the new teacher.	2.3248	1.04098
Capacity to establish emotional support and positive relationships with the new teacher that promote their security and self-esteem.	2.3248	1.0579
Capacity to observe and analyze the didactic aspects of the new teacher's work.	2.3169	.99701
Activating and providing effective formative feedback aimed at promoting the improvement of the new teacher.	2.3071	1.02059
Knowledge of what it means to be a new teacher (feelings, uncertainties, training needs).	2.2913	.99395
Capacity to understand the problems and concerns of the new teacher, to empathize, and to set challenges and commitments.	2.2815	1.07761
Promoting reflective processes on the new teacher's own practice.	2.2539	1.06239
Knowing how to communicate with the new teacher, initiate relationships, resolve conflicts, etc.	2.1811	1.0818

The second group presents means between 2.48 and 2.52 and groups needs aimed at ensuring the quality and safety of the teaching process: improvement of evaluation, identification of harassment situations, and adaptation of strategies to diverse contexts. The proximity of these values to the upper limit indicates that mentoring places great importance on evaluative fairness, coexistence, and inclusion, while recognizing that each of these areas has an immediate impact on the school experience. The lowest level, with means between 2.18 and 2.43, gathers relational, institutional, and reflective competencies, such as understanding school climate, communication with management teams, formative feedback, and emotional support. Despite occupying the relatively last position, these variables are above the point of indifference, suggesting that mentors consider these prior knowledge areas to be somewhat consolidated or do not perceive them as an immediate obstacle to the quality of induction. Finally, the consistency of the standard deviations—all close to one— confirms a homogeneous perception, without dispersion that would indicate subgroups with highly differentiated needs.

Third, we analyzed potential differences based on the professional role performed. The analysis showed a statistically significant difference in a single item: the need to foster knowledge of the school's organization and culture in new teachers. This aspect was rated more intensely by principals and vice-principals, suggesting that their institutional position provides them with a more comprehensive perspective on the importance of the organizational integration of novice teachers.

The influence of prior mentoring experience on the perception of training needs was also analyzed. The Mann-Whitney U test revealed statistically significant differences in eight items, all of which had higher means in the group of teachers who had not served as mentors. These differences indicate that the absence of practical experience generates a higher perception of training need, especially in competencies such as establishing professional relationships, formative feedback, understanding novice teacher concerns, and evidence-based evaluation.

In the second research question, we aimed to determine the extent to which the detection of training needs was influenced by whether or not the teachers who responded to the questionnaire had served as mentors for new teachers. It would be expected that there would be considerable differences based on the responses of both groups, mainly due to the training components provided by the different national induction programs. In this case, we found that there are significant differences in seven of the twenty-four items. Table 3 presents the items with these significant differences at the .05 level. Of all the items where these differences were found,

the average rank of response is always higher for teachers who have not yet had the opportunity to serve as mentors for new teachers.

Table 3 | Analysis of Mean Differences Based on Having Served or Not Served as a Mentor

Items	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
1. Knowledge of what it means to be a new teacher (feelings, uncertainties, training needs).	17239	98242	.002
2. Knowing how to support the new teacher in establishing positive relationships with the rest of the school staff, the management team, and other educational agents.	18590.5	99593.5	.036
7. Capacity to observe and analyze the didactic aspects of the new teacher's work.	18681.5	99684.5	.042
10. Promoting a favorable attitude towards the mentoring function and support for the new teacher.	18313.5	99316.5	.021
12. Promoting reflective processes on the new teacher's own practice.	18659.5	99662.5	.041
14. Activating and providing effective formative feedback aimed at promoting the improvement of the new teacher.	18314	99317	.021
15. Capacity to understand the problems and concerns of the new teacher, to empathize, and to set challenges and commitments.	18385	99388	.024
Evaluating the teaching capacity of new teachers based on evidence and data.	18499	99502	.03

We can assume that mentors, being directly involved in the induction program, have a deep understanding of its content and objectives, as well as the specific needs it addresses. This allows them to have a more informed view of the areas that might require more training. In contrast, non-participating teachers may not be aware of the areas the program covers or the

existing gaps. Mentors have closely observed how beginning teachers apply what they learn and how they develop during the program, giving them a more detailed perspective on areas of need. Non-participating teachers may base their responses on general experiences or less specific perceptions of training needs. Mentors can sometimes base their responses on the feedback received from beginning teachers and the observed results in the classroom. Non-participating teachers may not have access to this information, and thus their responses may reflect more general perceptions.

Table 4 summarizes the priority training axes detected: documentary and administrative management, attention to extraordinary situations, and pedagogical adaptation to diversity. This synthesis provides a practical vision for guiding the design of training programs aimed at mentors.

Table 4 | Priority Training Axes Based on Study Results

Priority axis	Description	Implications for training
Documentary and administrative management	Mentors express a need for training in the use of reports, records, and administrative procedures linked to the National Induction Program.	Design training modules on regulatory procedures, accountability, and the preparation of institutional documentation.
Attention to extraordinary situations	Deficiencies are detected in responding to disciplinary conflicts, school bullying, and other contingencies that affect classroom coexistence.	Include intervention protocols, school mediation, and prevention strategies in mentor training.
Pedagogical adaptation to diversity	Mentors perceive difficulties in adjusting induction to the individual needs of novice teachers and the heterogeneity of school contexts.	Incorporate training in pedagogical differentiation, inclusive methodologies, and the personalization of induction pathways.

The study results indicate that, first, documentary and administrative management emerges as a key axis, as mentors report difficulties in the preparation of reports, records, and the handling of official procedures. This reflects the importance of future training modules including content on institutional regulations, accountability procedures, and the drafting of administrative documents, to equip mentors with practical tools for compliance with the legal framework and the program's internal organization.

Second, attention to extraordinary situations highlights deficiencies in addressing disciplinary conflicts, school bullying, and other incidents that affect coexistence. The research shows that mentors not only need

to know intervention and school mediation protocols but also to develop prevention and emotional management strategies, as these scenarios challenge classroom stability and the quality of educational processes. Incorporating this content into training favors a more effective response to complex situations and promotes school coexistence.

Finally, pedagogical adaptation to diversity highlights a training need related to the ability to adjust induction to the heterogeneous reality of beginning teachers and diverse school contexts. It becomes necessary for training modules to include pedagogical differentiation, the use of inclusive methodologies, and the personalization of learning pathways, so that mentors can successfully support the trajectory of each novice teacher and ensure an educational response tailored to individual differences.

The analysis of these three axes suggests that mentor training should be broad and transversal, integrating technical competencies (document management, action protocols, technology use) with the capacity for managing coexistence from a preventive and restorative perspective, as well as competencies for inclusive and contextualized education. Strengthening these aspects will result in better-prepared mentors, capable of responding to the ordinary and extraordinary challenges of the teaching function and, ultimately, positively influencing the quality of induction for new professionals in the educational system.

5 | Discussion and conclusions

The study confirms the relevance of the beginning of the teaching career and ratifies that mentoring constitutes a key resource for decreasing attrition and fostering the quality of educational practice, as reflected in international research (Kennedy et al., 2021; Meijer, 2021). The findings show that mentors identify deficiencies primarily in the individualized adjustment of induction pathways, the management of extraordinary situations, and administrative procedures. These needs address the first objective of the study and demonstrate that the mentoring function requires specific training, not just accumulated teaching experience.

The analysis of differences based on professional role and prior experience addresses the second objective of the research. School principals assign greater importance to organizational integration and school culture, while teachers without mentoring experience perceive broader deficiencies in feedback, didactic reflection, and conflict management. These findings demonstrate that the exercise of mentoring modifies the perception of

training needs and underscore the advisability of establishing mandatory preparatory training alongside processes of continuous updating.

Beyond individual competencies, the results emphasize that mentoring has an institutional effect. It is not solely about supporting novice teachers but about consolidating school environments capable of generating professional learning communities. In this sense, mentoring can be considered a pedagogical leadership mechanism in that it allows mentors to act as agents who mobilize their schools toward the improvement of teaching and innovation. Several studies indicate that pedagogical leadership is directly linked to the quality of teaching and the construction of collaborative school cultures (Bolívar, 2019; Day et al., 2016). Mentor training, therefore, not only affects the professional development of novices but also the capacity of educational institutions to transform and respond to contemporary challenges.

Collectively, the findings support the need to configure differentiated and progressive training programs that integrate technical competencies (document management, action protocols, technology use) with socio-emotional competencies (support, resilience, creation of positive school climates). The articulation of workshops, communities of practice, and peer tutoring can favor the consolidation of a mentor professional identity and contribute to mentoring becoming a strategic mechanism for institutional improvement.

The limitations of the study include its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported questionnaires, which may have introduced social desirability bias. Future work should incorporate longitudinal designs and mixed methods combining questionnaires, observation, and impact analysis on novice teacher outcomes. Conducting studies of this nature will allow for a more precise assessment of the extent to which mentor training influences both teacher retention and the capacity of educational institutions to renew and improve their quality.

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Author contributions

Conceptualization: M. C., P. C. methodology: P. C. validation: M. C., P. C. formal analysis: M. C. data curation: P. C. writing (original draft): M. C., P. C. writing (review & editing): M. C., P. C.; project administration: M. C., P. C.

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