

# *Beginning teachers: internship and registration*

## 新入職教師的見習與發牌制度

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### **Abstract**

The development of a highly qualified and committed teaching force is one of the core issues in ongoing worldwide educational reforms. In order to meet the new challenges, certain reforms on teacher education and professional development have been recently introduced in Hong Kong. Among these, the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ) initiates a new proposal on the internship and registration of beginning teachers. This paper attempts to examine the proposal from an international perspective. Both its pros and cons are going to be discussed. It is argued that the internship of beginning teachers should be introduced as a way of improving teacher development of Hong Kong at both individual and school levels.

### **Keywords**

beginning teacher, internship, mentoring

### **摘要**

首年入職為新任教師帶來衝擊，妥善的入職培訓有助提升教師的效能。師訓與師資諮詢委員會於二零零三年倡議在香港建立新入職教師的見習與註冊制度，然而直至目前為止，仍未落實有關政策，致令新任教師缺乏支援。本文借鑒外國經驗，旨在探討教師見習與註冊制度是否可行，並分析師徒式的成效，期望為香港的師訓發展開啟新方向。

### **關鍵詞**

新任教師，見習，師徒式

## 1 Introduction

In the new millennium, one of the core issues arising from ongoing worldwide educational reforms is the development of a highly qualified and committed teaching force to cater for “the invention of 21st century schools that can educate all children well...” (Darling Hammond, 1995:9-10; Cheng & Townsend, 2000). Hong Kong is no exception under this tide of change as a result of globalization (Mok & Chan, 2002). In order to meet the new challenges, certain reforms on teacher education and professional development have been introduced recently (Education Department, 2002; ACTEQ, 2003b). Currently, the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ) has initiated a new proposal on the internship and registration of beginning teachers (ACTEQ, 2003a; Education Commission, 2003, 2004; Mingpao Daily, 9 Jan 2003; Singtao Daily, 29 May 2003). This paper attempts to examine the proposal from an international perspective. Both its pros and cons are going to be discussed. My position is that the internship of beginning teachers should be introduced as a way of improving teacher development at both individual and school levels.

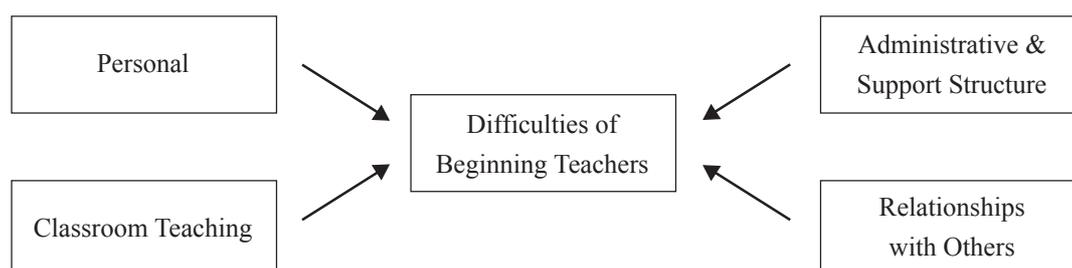
## 2 Induction from an international perspective

The growing impact of globalization has affected educational development in many parts of the globe. In order to maintain the national competitiveness in the global marketplace, governments across the world have started to review their education systems and different reform initiatives are introduced in education so as to enhance the global capacity of their citizens. Among diverse educational initiatives, induction of beginning teachers is viewed as an important area of concern for teacher education and professional development (Kestner, 1994).

A considerable amount of studies on exploring the problems and concerns of beginning teachers has been documented (Pang, 1991). It reveals that beginning teachers are confronted with numerous challenges especially in their first year of teaching. Although no two studies have produced precisely the same list of problems and concerns, the literature indicates that the problems of beginners experienced are intrinsic to the teaching profession and to the conditions of the school environment as a work place (Brock, 2001; Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Veenman, 1984).

The sources of difficulties facing beginning teachers, in general, include personal adaptability, classroom teaching, administrative and support structure as well as relationships with others as illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1. Sources of Difficulties of Beginning Teacher



In order to assist new teachers to be professionally competent, induction support is required to alleviate their problems (Tisher, 1982).

Recent studies indicate that teacher induction has been given high priority in the education policy of many overseas countries (Bubb et al., 2002; Educational Research Service, 2000; Moskowitz et al., 1997). In the

survey conducted by Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), it reveals that many countries recognize the need for extensive teacher induction support during the first year of teaching (Moskowitz et al., 1997). The summary of induction programs provided by selected APEC members is illustrated in figure 2.

Figure 2. Summary of the Induction Programs provided by Selected APEC Members (Source: Moskowitz et al., 1997, 205-208)

Country	Organization	Program Type(s)
Australia	Teacher induction is the responsibility of the territories and provinces.	Mentoring, Peer Probation, In-service training, Model Classroom Observations and Team Teaching.
Canada	Teacher induction is the responsibility of the various provinces.	Mentoring and Model Classroom Observations.
Chinese Taipei	The 1994 Teacher Training Act mandated a one-year teacher internship following four years of pre-service education and preceding graduation.	Internships (main component), Workshops and Guidance from University Professors.
Singapore	The national government requires that schools prepare for new teachers. Schools organize their own induction programs.	Mentoring, Seminars and Meetings, Ministry of Education Handbook.
United States	Teacher induction is a state responsibility and there are programs in 26 states. Some programs are state-run and others are school district-run.	Mentoring (most prominent), Seminars and Meetings, Model Classroom Observations and Internships.

Apart from school-based induction, some countries introduce the policy of internship and registration for beginning teachers. In this paper, four countries have been selected for exploring their policies of beginning teachers. Learning from foreign experiences is constructive to initiate the proposal for beginning teachers in Hong Kong.

### 2.1 The United Kingdom

United Kingdom is a country where a clear policy of induction is implemented. According to “the Teaching and Higher Education Act” enacted in 1998, all newly qualified teachers must satisfactorily complete a statutory

induction period (one school year). Regarding the implementation of internship, intern teachers are granted with 10% less workload as reflected in the teaching timetable. In addition, intern teachers receive monitoring and support from mentors who are also their colleagues. There is an assessment by the school at the end of each of the three terms. After the assessment, those who fail to meet the standards are not allowed to teach in maintained schools (Department for Education and Skills, 2003).

According to the requirement that all newly qualified teachers shall undertake a formal induction period, intern teachers must register with the General Teaching Council (GTC) of England whilst undertaking their induction since

its establishment in 2000. When intern teachers successfully complete the induction year, the appropriate body normally the Local Education Authority, or the Independent Schools Council is going to inform the GTC of the pass. The GTC then updates the teacher's record on the GTC Register of teachers and issues an induction certificate. Suppose an intern teacher fails the induction assessment, or be granted an extension, the GTC will record this on the register of teachers. In addition, the GTC also acts as an appeal body for intern teachers who fail their induction assessment (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). An obvious characteristic of internship in England is the involvement of GTC formed by practicing teachers.

## 2.2 The United States

Unlike the rigid induction policy implemented in the United Kingdom, the induction policy of the United States is rather imprecise since the requirements vary among states. A recent research indicates that 56 percent of public school teachers in their first three years of teaching has participated in a formal beginning teacher support program. These induction programs usually involve mentors working with beginning teachers (Hirsch et al., 2001).

Apart from induction support, a mechanism of teacher certification is adopted in some states. In general, certified teachers must hold a bachelor degree in the subject to be taught, pass state-required examinations, complete a teacher preparation program and possibly fulfill a supervised teaching internship. In New York, the largest school district in the United States, the beginning teachers in their first year of teaching must be mentored, and accumulate two years of teaching experience in order

to qualify for the professional certificate (Coleman et al., 2003).

## 2.3 Japan

Apart from western countries, Asian countries also formulate the policy for beginning teachers. In Japan, certified teachers must hold a bachelor degree, pre-service teaching training, and pass a qualifying examination. Instead of receiving mentoring before certification, the beginning teachers must be certified before receiving a year of mentoring provided by their schools (Chen, 2003, 21-37). In this respect, the induction of Japanese beginning teachers is a way of professional development rather than assessment or certification.

## 2.4 Taiwan

Similar to other countries with the practice of internship, the Ministry of Education also arranges one year of internship for the induction of beginning teachers in Taiwan.

According to the Article 8 of "Teacher Education Law" enacted in 1994, certified teachers must complete pre-service training with one additional year of mentoring successfully (Ministry of Education, 1994). Therefore, a year of mentoring becomes a process of certification.

## 3 The reform issue: the internship in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is no exception under the global tide of improving effectiveness of beginning teachers in their first year of teaching. Although the proposal on the internship and registration of beginning teachers initiated by ACTEQ is still not carried out, its arrangements have been clarified

through various channels (ACTEQ, 2003a; Education Commission, 2003, 2004; Mingpao Daily, 9 Jan 2003; Singtao Daily, 29 May 2003). The progress report of Education Commission clearly introduces the proposal as follow:

“ACTEQ is deliberating on a proposal to introduce internship requirement on beginning teachers, who will be given mentoring support throughout the internship period and be required to meet accreditation standards prior to their professional registration” (Education Commission, 2003).

The proposed internship plans to be employment-based, to be applied to all teachers, both trained and untrained, seeking first-time employment. In addition, internship has been planned to last for a continuous period of no less than one academic year within the same school (ACTEQ, 2003a).

All intern teachers are going to be assessed after the internship period. There is an accreditation consortium external to the schools to assess intern teachers' suitability for teaching, taking into consideration their professional development portfolio and feedback of mentors and school personnel. After the assessment, those who are unsuccessful in gaining accreditation may be allowed a second attempt in the same or another school.

If they continue to fail, they will be required to temporarily quit the profession. To those successfully accredited intern teachers, they may not be invited to continue teaching in the school of their internship though they are considered suitable for teaching (ACTEQ, 2003a). In other word, accredited intern teachers must seek their own employment before and after internship.

The arrangement of the proposal has further been elaborated by Prof. Cheng Kai Ming, the Chairman of the

ACTEQ. In the press interview, he points out that the assessment of internship should not be based on one examination or unlimited attempts. The assessment aims at ensuring beginning teachers to have the basic abilities of professional teachers, for example, subject matter knowledge, teaching methods, passion, love and care for student, communication skills etc. (Mingpao Daily, 9 Jan 2003). Furthermore, Prof. Cheng stated that the registered teacher status would not be granted unless intern teachers met the standards; but he predicted that only 1-3% of them would fail to meet the standards (Singtao Daily, 29 May 2003).

It was planned that the proposal of internship and registration for beginning teacher will come into effect from September 2005 (ACTEQ, 2003a). Despite the fact that no formal and detailed document will be introduced until this moment, the reform issue still deserves examination since internship is an important area of concern for improving both teaching competence and learning effectiveness.

#### **4 Searching the base for the proposal of internship in Hong Kong**

A considerable amount of studies on the problems of beginning teachers reveals that the first year of teaching is critical and this is also applicable to the context of Hong Kong (Lam, 2003; Pang, 1991). Therefore, the professional development of beginning teachers becomes an agenda item for the teacher education policy-makers of Hong Kong. This agenda item may also be the result of an increasing demand on teachers' professional development. Currently, a series of related educational documents is published such as “Continuing Professional Development for School Excellence: Consultation Paper on Continuing Professional Development of Principals”

in 2002 (Education Department, 2002) and “Towards A Learning Profession: the teacher competencies framework and the continuing professional development of teachers” in 2003 (ACTEQ, 2003b). It is not a surprise that the reform tide approaches beginning teachers.

Although the teaching profession is increasingly demanding, new entrants can enter into the profession as

untrained teachers in Hong Kong. The staffing establishment of secondary schools includes non-graduate posts and graduate posts. There are both trained and untrained teachers. According to the definition of Education and Manpower Bureau (2004: appendix 4), the term “trained teachers” refers to the teachers who hold one of the following qualifications as indicated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Qualification of Trained Teachers in Hong Kong



There is, however, no requirement in Hong Kong that teachers in secondary schools must be trained. The view that teachers at the secondary level need to be prepared academically by completing a first university degree, but not necessarily be professionally trained, has a long history. The government's own report on the education system in 1981 made the point succinctly:

“The high proportion of untrained teachers (37.9 percent of the total teaching force) is not as alarming as it looks or as critics of the system would have it to be, since this includes untrained graduate teachers who by virtue of their academic qualifications have a sound educational basis for teaching” (Education Department, 1981, 28).

The quality of human resources in education was

not of concern until the Education Commission released its fifth report in 1992 under the title “The Teaching Profession”, which was “a landmark in seeking improvements in teacher education”(Cooke, 2000, 42). Although the fifth report had nothing to say about the initial training of secondary school graduate teachers in universities, pre-service teacher training has become a long-term goal of teachers’ professional development in Hong Kong (Education Commission, 1992).

Since the number of university graduates and the places of pre-service teacher training have been increasing since 1990’s, a significant proportion of graduates has entered into the teaching profession with formal pre-service training. Nevertheless, there were still 43 per cent of untrained beginning teachers in secondary schools in

the school year of 2003-2004 (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2004). The high rate of untrained beginning teachers is incompatible with the promise of the government after the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty in 1997. In 1997, the Chief Executive decided to “require all new teachers to be trained graduates” (Policy Address, 1997, 83). One year later, the Chief Executive insisted “all new teachers to be trained graduates” (Policy Address, 1998, 94). In late 2002, the Secretary for Education and Manpower, however, claimed that the aim could hardly be achieved in near future (MingPao Daily, 31 October 2002). It means that university graduates can still enter into the profession as untrained teachers.

The induction provision for beginning teachers in Hong Kong is not satisfactory. Although the fifth Education Commission Report recommended that systematic induction programs should be developed in schools to support and guide new teachers during the difficult first year (Education Commission, 1992), the sort and scale of school-based induction provision provided in different schools are varied. Several studies reveal that school-based induction is limited and its effectiveness in meeting the needs of beginning teachers has been under criticism (Education Convergence, 1996; Lam, 2003; Wong, 1996).

Induction provision at system level is minimal. Induction programs are merely provided for beginning teachers on a single day or on a voluntary basis by the Education and Manpower Bureau. It is usually a 6-hour program for new teachers to learn how to teach a subject. In addition, the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre with the subsidy of the government offers an intensive induction course (4 days, totally 28 hrs) for new teachers in every

August. It is disputable that the present induction provision is able to satisfy the needs of beginning teachers as well as school administrators who are responsible for induction.

Beginning teachers enter an increasingly demanding profession; however, there is limited induction support. In order to ensure a smooth induction, the proposal of internship and registration initiated by the ACTEQ should come into effect promptly.

## **5 Contemplation on the internship in Hong Kong**

My position is that the proposal of internship and registration should be implemented in Hong Kong as a way of improving teacher development at both individual and school levels. Nevertheless, a range of debates can be made, and these arguments on internship include its effectiveness, workload, value and prospect.

### **5.1 The effectiveness of internship**

The first criticism of internship is its ineffectiveness because of ambiguous role of intern teachers. When they work under internship, different roles like mentors and colleagues may be perceived by themselves. The possible roles may include learner, teaching staff, privileged teaching staff, mediocre teaching staff etc. The diverse roles as viewed and expected by the stakeholders may affect the effectiveness of internship. Suppose that intern teachers regard themselves as learners while their colleagues regard them as inferior teaching staff, this kind of difference in expectations may hinder collaboration. Intern teachers should not only be supported by mentors, they should also get full support from all colleagues during

internship.

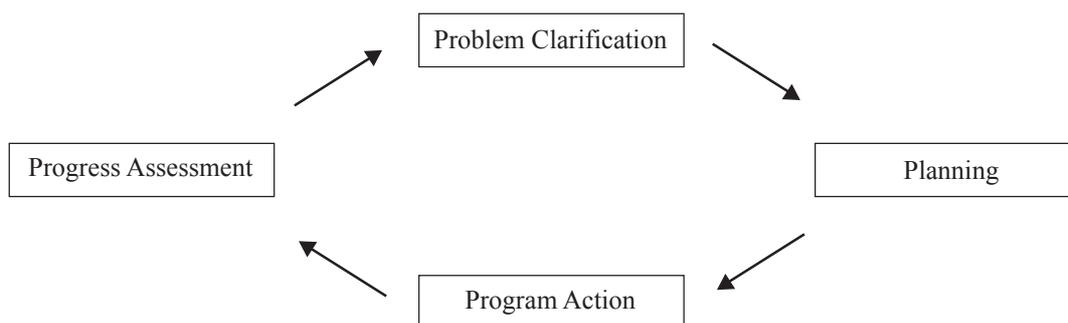
The advantage of mentoring is disputable since it depends on full participation of mentors and intern teachers. If both of them contribute sincerely, they may gain from the relationship; otherwise, it is just a forced, superficial and unproductive mentor-intern. Therefore, internship may be too idealistic since it is hard to guarantee enthusiasm and commitment lasting for the whole period.

As superficial mentoring may be resulted due to contradictory expectation and involvement of mentors and intern teachers, mentor-intern relationship should be carefully handled. The positive relationship between mentors and mentees is the heart of a supportive process (Freedman, 1993). There are various types of matching, for example, geographical proximity (proximity of seating) and occupational proximity (similarity of duties). One important point to note is that successful mentor-

intern relationship requires common belief of both parties (Gehrke, 1988). It is wise to ask, are these two professionals suited to working together within such a specialized and demanding relationship? The selection and training of mentors is a crucial part of mentoring. Successful mentoring behavior can be taught (Wolfe, 1992). Mentors should receive an ongoing program on effective mentoring. The topics of training such as active listening techniques, communication skills, effective teaching, supervision and coaching, conflict resolution, problem-solving skill etc, are often included in the training of mentors (Thies-Sprinthall, 1986).

Without careful planning and implementation, any mentoring program will be ineffective and destined to fail (Haensly, 1990). Therefore, mentoring as a key part of internship should be based on a process of reflection as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. 4P Model of Reflection (Chung & Lee, 2002, 37)



As revealed by the figure, problem clarification, planning, program action and progress assessment are four main components of effective mentoring and internship.

## 5.2 The workload of internship

The second criticism is that internship gives an extra

burden to schools at different levels. In order to enhance the effectiveness of mentoring, mentors are expected to highly involve in the relationship. Thus, the workload of mentors is intensified. Not only mentors are affected by internship, but also other colleagues are affected by internship since they are expected to offer support to intern

teachers. Furthermore, certain concessions are usually granted to intern teachers, for example, intern teachers will be assigned 10% less teaching workload (Wong, 1996), the school administration is thus affected.

Although internship becomes a burden to the schools, this is a worthwhile burden. In order to take the social responsibility of teachers and schools, internship encourages sharing of knowledge and experience between mentors and intern teachers. The teaching workforce is then strengthened. In addition, proper selection and adequate training of mentors can reduce the workload, and it can bring pleasure and satisfaction to the schools and intern teachers. Mentors should not work alone. They should get support from the schools and various institutions.

In the practice of internship, the principal plays a crucial role. Literature supports the critical role of principal leadership with regard to staff development and school improvement (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Cheng, 1994). The administrators can establish the management mechanism based on the technology of school development planning, strategic management and school monitoring, from which the problems and conflicts in implementing induction program are readily identified and reduced. The school principal's support to the staff is a prerequisite to such an effort as "supportive and responsive actions were essentials to maintain the morale of the teachers and the momentum of change" (Lam, 1992: 483). Effective induction provision needs to be blessed with a genuine support and commitment to goals of induction by the principal. With the support of principal, the status and significance of induction program can be upgraded.

### 5.3 The value of internship

The third criticism of internship is its low value. As predicted by the Chairman of the ACTEQ, only 1-3% of intern teachers fail to meet the standards of internship after the period (Singtao Daily, 29 May 2003). The high percentage of passing rate may fail to select the candidates suitable for contributing to the teaching force. Therefore, internship is blamed for its low value.

It is a matter of debate whether internship should be introduced as a way of acquiring professional development or selecting very few talented candidates. Nevertheless, internship should not be a gate to block the aspirants from entering into the teaching profession. It should be a mechanism for beginning teachers to learn and to improve during the induction period.

### 5.4 The prospect of internship

The fourth criticism of internship is the lack of central allocation of employment. In this respect, beginning teachers must seek employment by themselves before starting internship. Some may worry that it is difficult for beginning teachers to start their internship due to limited teaching vacancies. Currently, there are increasing surplus teachers in both primary and secondary schools due to shrinking classes. In addition to keen competition in labour market, it is worried that principals are unwilling to employ beginning teachers.

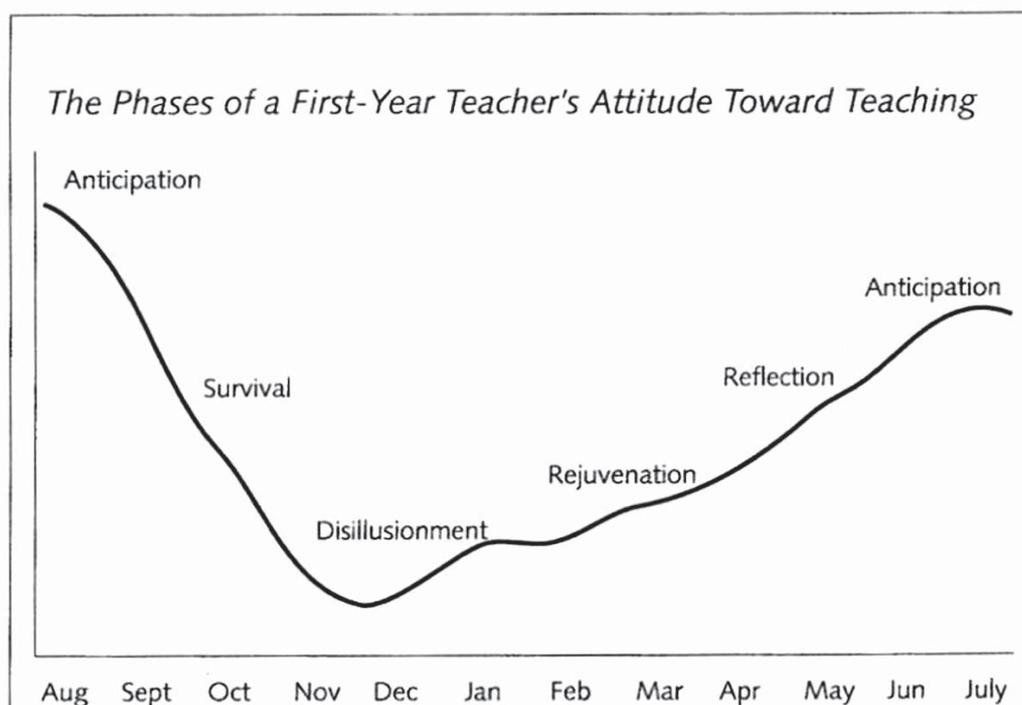
Although there is keen competition in the labour market, it is still possible for beginning teachers to get employment and start their internship. In the school year of 2003-2004, there were 43% untrained beginning teachers in secondary schools (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2004). Instead of offering financial allowance, the support from government and teacher education

institutions is a factor to encourage more schools to participate in internship. Research reveals that university-school collaboration or partnership also provides positive experience for prospective teachers to fit the requirements (Clark, 1999).

### 5.5 The urgency of internship

The first year of teaching is critical to beginning teachers. Substantial studies try to explore the different stages of the first year of teaching (Chan, 1993; Moir, 1999; Ryan, 1986). A summary of the stages is illustrated in figure 5.

Figure 5. The phase of a first year teacher's attitude toward teaching (Moir, 1999)



As exhibited in Figure 5, Moir (1999) proposes a six-level model indicating psychological changes of beginning teachers in their first year of teaching.

In the phase of anticipation, teachers tend to romanticize the role of teachers. Teachers at survival phase are bombarded with a variety of problems and situation they have not anticipated. Teachers at disillusionment phase are weak in morale where they question their commitment and competence. In the phase of rejuvenation, teachers accept the realities of teaching where they have more confidence and better skills to cope

with problems. Teachers at reflection phase reflect back over the year. They then think about the changes and the plan for the following year (Moir, 1999).

Different scholars hold different views on the number and the characteristic of various stages of beginning teachers' first year. Nevertheless, they tend to accept that beginning teachers are growing up from anxiety into confidence, from frustration into stabilization. In this phase of transformation, it is not easy for beginning teachers to ask other teachers for help because the cellular organization of schools constrains the amount and type

of interchange of idea (Lortie, 1975). The situation is unfavourable for beginners to receive ongoing direction and assistance from experienced colleagues (Huling-Austin, 1990).

Beginning teachers have to solve problems, consider alternative solutions, make a decision, and assess the outcome of their performance on their own. That means they have to learn to swim quickly; otherwise, they will sink. To do so, a mentality of survival is likely to be developed (Bush, 1983). In order to help beginning teachers to survive and to develop in the profession, internship through mentoring is required to ensure a successful induction.

## 5.6 The benefit of internship

Internship through mentoring is beneficial for beginning teachers to be successful during induction. Substantial studies indicate that mentoring is an effective induction provision (Hessinger, 1998; Norbeck, 1999; Weedy, 2001). Anderson and Shannon (1988) proposes a classical definition of mentoring as follows:

“A nurturing in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the contexts of an ongoing, caring relationship

between the mentor and the protégé” (Anderson & Shannon, 1988:39).

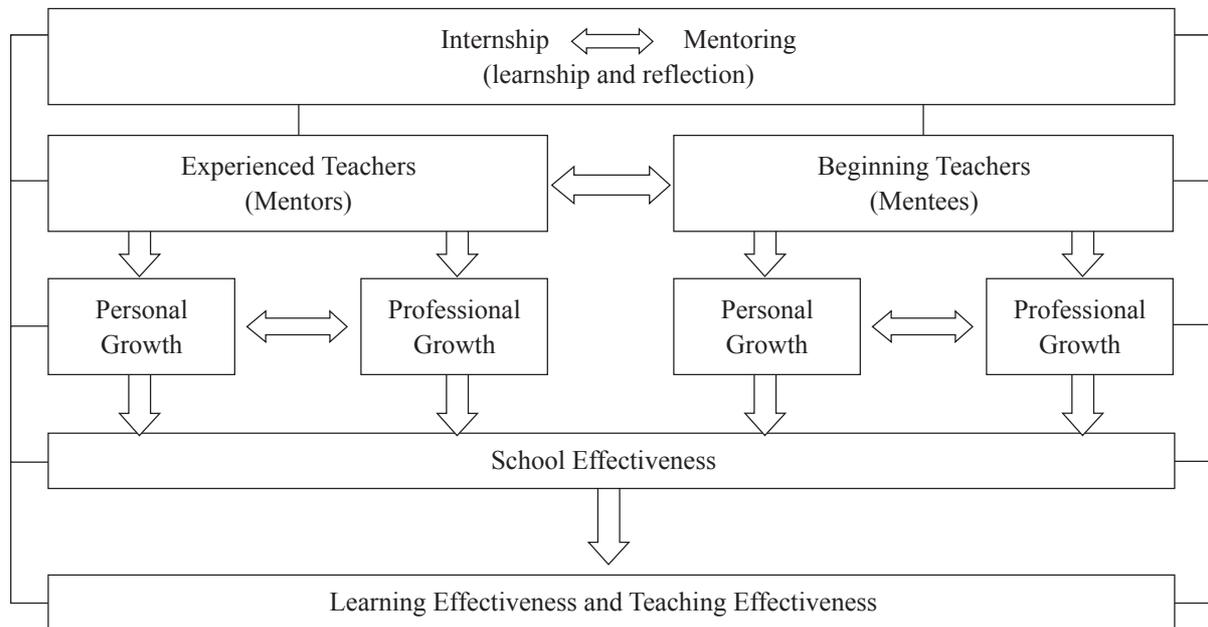
In addition, a mentor's role can also be coach, nurturer, trainer, leader, talent-developer and opener-of-doors (Sullivan, 1992). With the support of mentors, beginning teachers receive assistance to help them overcome the challenges in their first year of teaching.

In the practice of internship by the form of mentoring, a learning and cooperative atmosphere could be fostered in the schools. The role of teachers in charge of induction and principals is crucial. They should convince mentors and other members of the schools that internship is not merely beneficial to the career of beginning teachers. Mentors and other members of the school can also gain from internship.

The relationship between mentor and mentee is a starting point. Internship should not be restricted to the involvement of beginning teachers, organizers and mentor teachers. In the research of Bubb et al. (2002), it reveals that whole school involvement in induction is highly beneficial to both beginning teachers and experienced teachers. In this respect, whole school approach to internship can be adopted since mentoring can be used as a strategy for staff development where all members of the school are involved (Kelly et al., 1992).

As a focus of internship, the benefit of mentoring can be illustrated in figure 6.

Figure 6. The benefit of mentoring

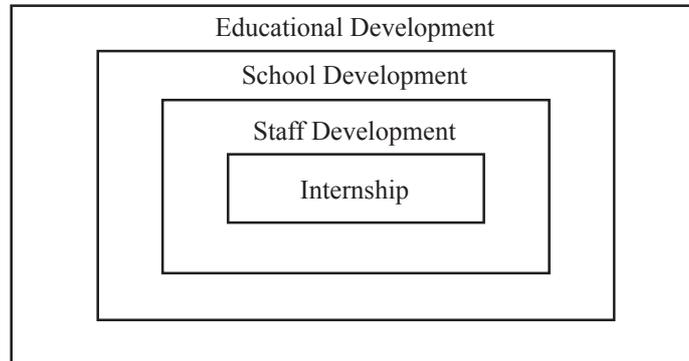


As illustrated in Figure 6, learning and reflection are two essential features of internship. Mentoring not only provides an opportunity for beginning teachers to learn from and to be guided by mentors, but also provides an opportunity for mentors to learn and to reflect their relationship with mentees (Killion, 1990). In the process of mentoring, personal and professional growth between a mentor and a beginning teacher are reciprocal. Therefore, mentoring can be used as a strategy for staff development. As all teachers are improving through the practice of mentoring, three main components of education including school effectiveness, teaching effectiveness and students' learning effectiveness can be enhanced.

In the practice of internship, collaborative culture is generated from peer coaching of two people to entire school community. In this respect, internship should be a concern of all members in the schools. As peer learning and sharing becomes the preference of the members, a learning community is developed (Sergiovanni, 1995). Under such school culture, internship is implemented with consistency and efficiency. As a result, induction is beneficial to the professional development of both beginning teachers and all other members.

As teachers are pillars of education, Edelfelt (1983) provides a conceptual model to suggest that teachers' professional development leads to school improvement and results in educational improvement. Similar model of internship is modified and it is illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Four Contexts of Professional Development



## 6 Conclusion

It is now widely accepted by teacher educators worldwide that the education of teachers should be a lifelong process, rather than being limited to a relatively short period such as initial teacher education before a teacher embarks upon professional life (Day, 1999). With the impact of globalization, the proposal of internship and registration for beginning teachers in Hong Kong is initiated from the experience of other countries. Despite the fact that there are debates on the practice of internship, it is well-documented that

internship through mentoring is beneficial for beginning teachers to be successful in their first year of teaching. Nevertheless, internship is merely a starting point. After the completion of internship and registration, the licensed teachers must be in pursuit of in-service teacher education. In addition, the idea of internship can also be borrowed as a strategy for staff development at school level. Therefore, internship should be an important agenda item for educational reform that deserves further examination.

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