Shaping our Future Growing Together

FA1-3 Enhance mentoring and induction support for new teachers

Australian Education Research Organisation

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Banner artwork by Wadawurrung woman and NIKERI Institute alumnus Dr Deanne Gilson.
The artwork is entitled 'Creation Tree of Knowledge' and depicts the Wadawurrung Creation Story of South Eastern Victoria at a place known as Black Hill in Gordon which is situated on Deanne's ancestral Country.

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- The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) and Deakin University acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands, waterways, skies, islands and sea country across Australia. We pay our deepest respects to First Nations cultures and Elders past and present. We endeavour to continually value and learn from First Nations knowledges and educational practices.

Our work so far…

Interviews, focus groups & national survey (Deakin)

Landscape scan (AERO)

Literature review (AERO-led, Deakin-supported)

Recommendations for policymakers and sector leaders for the next stage of NWS implementation

DRAFT

To be (gratefully) tested and refined through this workshop and informal conversations throughout today's forum

Session overview FA1-3

Mentoring and induction support for new teachers

Sharing what we know

- What we know from the literature about mentoring and induction
- Themes in the national survey, focus groups and interview data

Overview of draft recommendations

- Framing our recommendations as efforts to answer the why, what, who, when, where, how of mentoring and induction

Focusing in: testing and refining

- Discussing the feasibility, opportunities, and challenges for investing in and evaluating a range of options to increase supply of capable mentors for all new teacher, regardless of their setting or location

Mentoring – what we know from the literature

Mentoring: What is it?

- An intentional, nurturing, insightful process with the central aim being to develop professional learning and improve professional practice (Burley & Pomphrey 2011)
- Key elements: reciprocal, respectful, responsive and reflective engagement
- Trust and connectedness is built through the duality of each participant's role

What is its value?

- Gains in confidence and recognition of agency = areas of professional growth
- Building of practice leading to positive outcomes for children
- Sustained networking
- Supports teacher retention

What is effective mentoring in the early childhood context?

- Clear understanding and agreement between all stakeholders

- Responds to the situated nature of learning

- Dedicated time within work hours when mentoring occurs

- Organisation and leadership support

- Climate of mutual respect, collegiality, openness and support

- Trained mentors receive ongoing support and further learning

Induction – what we know from the literature

Induction: What is it?

- An act or process of introducing and supporting (formally or informally) a new staff member to an organisation
- Specific events may be part of the orientation 'program'
- Mentoring is frequently cited as a useful resource in the induction process

What is its value?

- Teacher retention rates – when mentoring is included (Gut, 2014)
- Reduced feelings of isolation
- Improved reflection on practice
- Increased positive attitudes

What is effective induction in the early childhood context?

- A process adapted to the context and individual's requirements and capabilities

- 'Activities' include internal and external components

- Knowledgeable leaders oversee the induction

- Time allocated to induction activities

- Partnerships between universities and educational settings may be useful in creating and supporting induction

Induction & mentoring – what needs to be considered

Themes in the national survey, focus groups and interview data

- Induction and/or mentoring is not universally available

- Measures of quality and success are often not evident

- For many teachers (mentors and mentees), mentoring and induction occur in **addition** to workplace hours with no remuneration or workload acknowledgement

- Limited numbers of skilled mentors are available, with some areas having no access

- Cost of some mentoring programs/ and mentor training is restrictive for some service and access to resources limited

- Some services / organisations do not value induction and/or mentoring so do not allocate resources

- Welcoming and Elder guidance mentoring processes are **already** established in Indigenous Communities
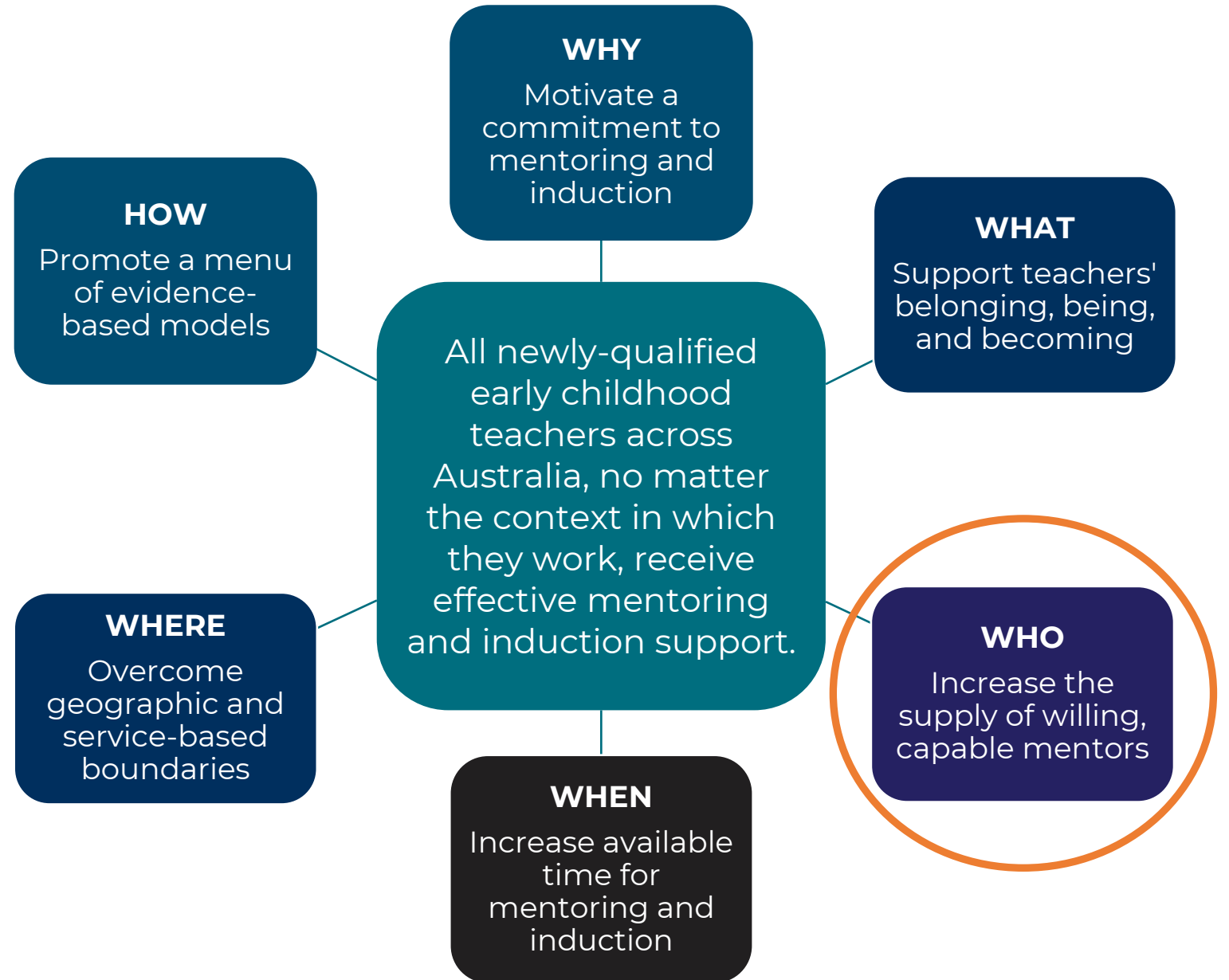
Cultural connections to kinship systems: Mentoring and induction

- Indigenous early childhood Welcoming and Elder guidance mentoring processes are already well established in Indigenous Communities

- Welcoming and Elder Guidance takes time and this is deliberate

- Shared Indigenous ways of Welcoming and Mentoring – Cultural Mentoring - are viewed as important, respectful and culturally responsive

- 'Coming up through Community': Potential of early childhood teachers as point of entry into an early childhood qualification in higher education

- Indigenous care and cultural mentorship needs to be upheld as a vital model of Mentorship and Welcoming to the wider early childhood sector

Values of reciprocity: Connection to country in Indigenous early childhood communities

- Shared models of Mentorship and Welcoming are extended throughout Indigenous workplace sectors

- Elders determine when a person is ready to become an early childhood teacher and by extension, when they are ready to actually teach in the community

- Sending a person off Country into higher education is viewed by Indigenous Elders as an important step to develop professional knowledges

- Funding is crucial to support reciprocated learning

AERO's draft high-level recommendations aim to bring together and build upon existing efforts to advance a collective-improving profession that sustains, renews, and extends all selves.

HOW
Promote a menu of evidence-based models

WHY
Motivate a commitment to mentoring and induction

WHAT
Support teachers' belonging, being, and becoming

All newly-qualified early childhood teachers across Australia, no matter the context in which they work, receive effective mentoring and induction support.

WHERE
Overcome geographic and service-based boundaries

WHO
Increase the supply of willing, capable mentors

WHEN
Increase available time for mentoring and induction

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: Invest in and evaluate a range of options to increase mentor supply so that all new teachers have access to capable mentors, regardless of their setting or location.

- Partnering between services (e.g., leveraging cluster management models)

- Establishing and supplying access to an external pool of mentors

- Extending university-based academic support beyond ITE

- Peer mentoring

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What role could your organisation play in testing and evaluating any of these options? What could others do?

What can you do to ensure access regardless of setting or location?

What challenges need to be addressed?

Thank you

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