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Carol A. Mullen



Equity in School Mentoring and Induction

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This book is for all the professionals out there who do a beautiful job mentoring new teachers and leaders, and who radiate the power of equity on behalf of every child.

—Carol A. Mullen

Foreword

During my tenure as a professor, I was introduced to Dr. Carol Mullen by one of my mentors, Dr. Frances Kochan, which vastly expanded my mentoring constellation. As of 2025, it has been 21 years since that introduction. Carol has done a wonderful job mentoring me into the academy and is a close, loyal friend who has instilled the value of paying forward the mentoring from which I benefit. Mentoring is a commitment I enjoy as I interact with my proteges, and I find Carol's words of encouragement to always be present during these sessions. Carol is a proactive mentor and champion for those needing support in their personal and professional lives. Many people in academies, associations, and schools have long benefitted from her investment in us.

Kathy Kram addressed the importance of having a mentoring constellation for personal and professional growth many years ago (see Kram & Isabella, 1985). I still enjoy using *constellation* to describe how my mentors have cared for and sponsored me in my professional life. In the present volume, Carol refers to these constellations as groups and networks. My constellation is a network of traditional and nontraditional stars in the universe who hover as I go about my work as an educator. I depend on these mentors to make the world a kinder, richer place for us all and remind me to always look inward. They never let me down.

Throughout my 49 years as a K–12 teacher administrator and college professor, I noticed that U.S. schools were steeped in middle-class values, which do not always accommodate school diversity. We cannot lead schools with diverse needs in the same ways they have been led. We must create and adhere to equitable practices that support educators and their students as unique individuals. These thoughts came to mind while reading Carol's new book *Equity in School Mentoring and Induction*, published by Springer.

Committed to equity in new teacher mentoring, Carol makes a significant contribution to educational literature. She builds on support, accessibility, and collaboration (SAC) in mentoring practice (Mullen & Fallen, 2022) to include equity as a mentoring component. *SACE* is the name of her original framework, which stands for support–accessibility–collaboration–equity. Current K–12 administrators and aspiring leaders in educational leadership preparation programs can greatly benefit from thinking about and applying SACE in their school districts.

With approximately 50% of teachers leaving in the first 5 years of their careers (Hobson, 2021, as cited in Mullen, Chap. 2, herein), like Carol, I believe that being mindful of equity will help retain effective teachers, increase inclusion, and reduce racism. Indeed, these are core messages of Carol's book, which I affirm.

The five chapters offer insight into how to approach equity in mentoring practices. Framing the mentoring relationship with an equity lens is an inclusive way to support all teachers in their development. Humans thrive when they feel belonging and connection, and equitable practices in mentoring programs provide encouragement to those ends.

Chapter 4 contains three of Carol's own cases from urban (New Jersey), suburban (Virginia), and rural (Virginia) schools. Her graphics show how SAC and equity, which is SACE, play out in the mentoring of new teachers and staff. She acknowledges that the mentoring process is ultimately determined by the effectiveness of the mentor and those who support them, primarily the school principal, other administrators, and higher education faculty. She posits that new teachers should be engaged in continuous, sustainable mentoring relationships, and explains how administrators can reflect on, plan, and implement their novice mentoring programs.

As mentoring researchers, we know that effective mentoring programs and constellations of mentors offer support to teachers and leaders while they practice their craft. We also know that as we learn more and more about successful mentoring, we must be willing to advance our mentoring models to extend knowledge. Carol has done that with this book—she has taken critical mentoring components to another level with the addition of equity. As I see it, this research should be a call to K–12 administrators and teachers, education policymakers, and principal preparation faculty to become “equity champions,” to quote Carol.

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Equity in School Mentoring and Induction is the third book in the *SpringerBriefs in Education* series I've had the pleasure of writing and publishing. Its approval followed a process involving rounds of internal and external reviews. Anonymous external reviewers submitted reports in response to my book proposal and the full manuscript. After reviewing the proposal, they wrote that the book should make an original contribution to the field by "focus[ing] on mentoring and induction but with a welcome spotlight on equity in the process" from "an expert in the field." All parties agreed on the value of this project, encouraging its pursuit, for which I was grateful. Additional external reviewers affirmed the complete manuscript for publication.

Ellen H. Reames, professor of educational leadership at Auburn University, USA, wrote the foreword. Her expertise, applicable to this book, encompasses educational outreach and school/university partnership development. I am pleased she made prefatory comments.

William (Bill) Kealy, my life partner, enthusiastically cheered me on while improving the graphical displays and playing barista.

Superintendent Gerald Fitzhugh (case #1) and Principal Mattie Fallen (case #2) were each coresearchers of the original study with whom I authored two articles (Mullen & Fallen, 2022; Mullen et al., 2022). Principal Fallen has since retired. Teacher Jennifer Fleming (case #3) conducted the school interviews with me and read the case I wrote, which is being published for the first time. (The demands of Dr. Fleming's new leadership position overlapped with Springer's timeline, preventing her from coauthoring the case, but she was able to join me in presenting it at a conference in 2024. Our fuller collaborative study continues as planned.)

I wish to express my gratitude to the practitioners who engaged in research interviews (cases 1, 2, and 3), offering their time and insights. Their work in schools greatly

enriched this book and my original framework known as support-accessibility-collaboration-equity (SACE).

This project was partially supported with internal funding from Virginia Tech, my home university: (a) a faculty research grant (2023–2024) from the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and (b) a faculty summer stipend (2024) from the Center for Humanities. Go Hokies!

Credits

In Chap. 4, case #1 was derived from a journal article authored by C. A. Mullen, G. Fitzhugh, & A. J. Hobson (2022). District-wide mentoring: Using Kram’s model to support educators. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 58(1), 26–31. This work was included in a revised and updated form, with written permission from *Kappa Delta Pi Record*.

Case #2 is also a modification of a journal article authored by C. A. Mullen and M. T. Fallen. (2022). “Navigating uncharted waters”: New teacher mentoring and induction. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership*, 7(4), 751–785. This work was revised and updated, with the written permission of *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership*.

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