

## Educator Evaluation System Training

**Module:** Probationary

### Action Plan

<b>Current Reality – Differentiated Needs and Support</b>		
Does your current induction system <i>adequately support and develop effective practices</i> of Year 1, Year 2, and Years 3-5? Yes or No?		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Ideas to Strengthen</b>
Year 1		
Year 2		
Years 3-5		

<b>Missouri Mentoring Program Standards</b>			
What adjustments, if any, will your school need to consider when it comes to assuring that your mentoring program is <i>in alignment with</i> the current Mentoring Program Standards?			
<b>Standard</b>	<b>What is Working?</b>	<b>Area(s) for Growth</b>	<b>Next Steps...</b>

**Tier I High-Yield Practices**

What **"Tier 1" high-yield practices** would you want to ensure teachers receive training on during the early years of teaching in your school system?

Can you find **alignment in the Year 1 and 2 standards/quality** indicators outlined within the Missouri Model Educator Evaluation System?

Tier I High Yield Practice	Rationale	Alignment to Year 1 and 2 Documents

**Comprehensive Induction System and Missouri Teacher Standards**

Choose 1-2 items from the Comprehensive Induction Self-Monitoring Checklist and determine “what’s next” in order to **enhance your current induction system** for Year 1, 2, 3-5 teachers.

How might you involve the 3 types of support: **Administrator, Mentor, Professional Development**

How might you begin to **incorporate the Missouri Teacher Standards** into your induction system for probationary teachers?

As a means to provide direction and focus?

Item	Administrator Support	Mentor Support	Professional Dev	MO Teacher Standards

## Summary of Changes to Probationary

1. Added introductions (slide 3)
2. Shortened refresher (slides 6-14)
3. Added transition from Foundation Module (slides 15-16)
4. Added a visual to support participants thinking about differentiation between probationary and other staff (slide 55)
5. Frontloaded the Missouri Model (Year 1 and 2) and Connected to “3 Types of Support” (slides 47-56)
  - have the participants brainstorm ideas for what the 3 types of support could provide the probationary teacher
  - for rural schools...this 3 types of support piece will be what allows them to see a vision for “comprehensive induction support”
6. Used Comprehensive Induction Components as the FRAME to Educate with SPS and Mentoring Standards (slides 57-96)
  - notice that I have the focus being on component C, F, G and H (ONLY) to provide focus for educating/learning
  - action planning after each focused component (C, F, G and H)

### Rationale for Changes:

- Realized, quickly, that our participants needed to be engaged with the concept of how educator evaluation approach needed to be differentiated within entire evaluation model.
- Too heavy on comprehensive induction...needed more processing time to think about “steps to take” in supporting probationary teacher THROUGH educator evaluation system.
- Videos have been cut, but will be selected if time allows to support teacher perspective.

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**Comprehensive Induction System and Missouri Teacher Standards**

Choose 1-2 items from the Comprehensive Induction Self-Monitoring Checklist and determine “what’s next” in order to **enhance your current induction system** for Year 1, 2, 3-5 teachers.

How might you involve the 3 types of support: **Administrator, Mentor, Professional Development**

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# Comprehensive Induction System Self-Monitoring Tool

Comprehensive Induction System Component	Highly Effective	Effective	Slightly Effective	Not Effective
<p><b>A. Builds on the pre-service experience of the teacher candidate</b>            This includes the interview and hiring process where the candidate interacts with central office human resource directors and administrators of buildings and is first exposed to the culture of the school setting and its unique priorities.</p> <p>Evidence:</p>				
<p><b>B. Offers support and guidance prior to the actual beginning of the school year</b>            This includes the assigning of a mentor for direct support. The induction process ensures that the new teacher is prepared for everything from how to send out a welcome and introduction communication, to arranging the desks and organizing the classroom, to planning lessons and strategies for teaching classroom routines and establishing rapport with students. A support network is in place for the novice educator even before the arrival of students.</p> <p>Evidence:</p>				

Comprehensive Induction System Component	Highly Effective	Effective	Slightly Effective	Not Effective
<p><b>C. Part of a continuum of professional development with systematic training throughout the five year period</b>            It contains sustained support informed less by the amount of experience than by data on the performance of the educator. It is linked to the priorities and needs of students as articulated in the improvement plan for the building and in the district's comprehensive school improvement plan.</p> <p>Evidence:</p>				
<p><b>D. Includes study groups where new teachers can network and build support, commitment, and leadership</b>            The process provides opportunities for new teachers to network throughout the school community where new and veteran educators interact and treat one another with respect and are valued for their particular contribution towards the community's shared values, goals and commitments. Networking highlights the importance of a collaborative culture where teachers can feel connected, contribute meaningfully to a group and experience success by making a difference.</p> <p>Evidence:</p>				

<b>Comprehensive Induction System Component</b>	<b>Highly Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Slightly Effective</b>	<b>Not Effective</b>
<p><b>E. Incorporates a strong and significant administrative presence</b></p> <p>A successful process contains strong administrative support that involves more than just assigning a mentor. It's important that the novice educator understand the priorities and expectations of the community within which they will work as articulated and monitored by the administrator. The effective leader has a deep understanding of the teachers they lead and can involve them in important instructional decisions. The administrator creates the culture for the school and makes available opportunities for teachers to learn from one another.</p> <p>Evidence:</p>				
<p><b>F. Integrates a mentoring component</b></p> <p>The mentor provides one-to-one support in planning and instruction, assisting with unexpected challenges and offering tips or directing the novice educator toward other educators or additional resources to address specific issues. The mentor is a type of confidant to assist with the transition of preparation into practice.</p> <p>Evidence:</p>				

Comprehensive Induction System Component	Highly Effective	Effective	Slightly Effective	Not Effective
<p><b>G. Presents a structure for modeling effective teaching during in-services, classroom visits, and mentoring</b></p> <p>A structured process that includes focused instructive feedback and allows new teachers to observe others, and be observed by others, demonstrates the priority that developing professional practice is an essential strategy for improving student learning.</p> <p>Evidence:</p>				
<p><b>H. Includes the collection of baseline performance data and the identification of initial strengths and opportunities for growth</b></p> <p>Improving professional practice requires a focus on performance data. This data can signal areas of strength as well as opportunities for growth. Areas of strength are those that the novice educator can use to leverage growth in student performance. Opportunities for growth are those areas that become the primary target of the teacher's personal reflection and development efforts.</p> <p>Evidence:</p>				

# Comprehensive Induction

## (EES Probationary Guideline)

Induction is a comprehensive, multi-year process designed to train and acculturate new teachers in the academic standards and vision of the district.

All effective induction programs have three basic parts:

1. **Comprehensive:** There is an organization or structure to the program consisting of many activities and many people who are involved. There is a group that oversees the program and rigorously monitors it to be sure that it stays the course towards student learning.
2. **Coherent:** The various activities and people are logically connected to each other.
3. **Sustained:** The comprehensive and coherent program continues for many years.

A comprehensive induction process that is successful in orientating, socializing and developing the novice educator includes these components:

- a. Builds on the pre-service experience of the teacher candidate
- b. Offers support and guidance prior to the actual beginning of the school year
- c. Part of a continuum of professional development with systematic training throughout the five year period that includes feedback from mentors, administrators, and peers
- d. Includes study groups where new teachers can network and build support, commitment, and leadership in a professional learning community
- e. Incorporates a strong and significant administrative presence
- f. Integrates a mentoring component
- g. Presents a structure for modeling effective teaching during in-services, classroom visits, and mentoring
- h. Includes the collection of baseline performance data and the identification of initial strengths and opportunities for growth

This page contains the text of a regulation adopted by the Missouri State Board of Education (May, 2008). An official copy of the full text of this regulation is contained in the [Code of State Regulations](#), published by the Office of Secretary of State.

**TITLE 5 - DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
DIVISION 80 - OFFICE OF EDUCATOR QUALITY  
CHAPTER 850 - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**5 CSR 80-850.045 Mentoring Program Standards**

**PURPOSE:** *This rule establishes standards for successful mentoring programs.*

(1) A successful mentoring program will include, but may not be limited to the standards listed below:

(A) An introduction to the cultural environment of the community, school district, school building and classroom that:	(B) A systemic and ongoing program review/evaluation by all stakeholders:	(C) An individualized plan for beginning educators that aligns with the district's goals and needs that:	(D) Appropriate criteria for selecting mentors that:	(E) Comprehensive mentor training that:	(F) A complete list of responsibilities for the mentor, beginning teacher and administrator(s) is addressed in Appendix A.	(G) Sufficient time for mentors to observe beginning educators and for the beginning educators to observe master educators are structured to provide multiple opportunities over time to minimize the need to require substitute teachers to facilitate observations by:
1. Provides awareness of school and district policies, procedures, and mission (teacher and student handbooks, Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP), goals, etc.)	1. Identifies all stakeholders;	1. Is aligned with the department's Model Teacher/Educator Evaluation Standards;	1. Have a minimum of three (3) years of experience;	1. Recognizes mentoring is NOT evaluation; confidentiality is required between mentor and protégé (except in situations of child endangerment);		1. Aligning class schedules and planning periods to complement mentoring duties;
2. Expresses community norms/local expectations (community tour, housing, medical facilities, faith community, etc.);	2. Identifies mentoring outcomes, how they will be measured, and timelines;	2. Is a systematic and concise mentoring and professional development plan that prioritizes the immediate and future needs of the new educator;	2. Have traits such as enthusiasm and job commitment;	2. Includes cognitive coaching skills along with collaborative training;		2. Utilizing state and local professional development funds, Career Ladder or stipends to support mentors' additional duties;
3. Complements professional organizations at district and state/national levels;	3. Gathers regular and systematic feedback from mentor, protégé and administrators to determine if mentoring is working (might include pre/post surveys for mentors and protégés and may include	3. Aligns with district's CSIP and certification requirements;	3. Are committed to self-growth as well as mentoring;	3. Includes observation and feedback training/skills;		3. Providing release time for observation and meeting (minimum of three (3) each year); and

	information on retention rates/numbers, levels of job satisfaction, student achievement, or cost of turnover);				
4. Discusses classroom equality-gender/race/abilities;	4. Is based on a foundation of best practice;	4. Establishes outcomes for new educator;	4. Hold a same or similar position/job or grade/subject area (in or out of building/district);	4. Provides an awareness of phases of first-year educators (stress, depression, etc.)	4. Encouraging college support of resources, on-line classes, personal visits and/or beginning educators' assistance programs.
5. Is a systematic and ongoing introduction to data analysis, assessment practice and process, etc. (not a one-day workshop)	5. Requires independent/anonym ous exit interviews of staff (may be connected to beginning educators' survey at state level) so clear reasons for staff departures can be determined;	5. Is an extension or part of a professional development plan that may have begun during student teaching/internship or culminating project in college;	5. May use a mechanism to end pairing if either mentor or protégé is not satisfied;	5. Provides training on mentoring standards, teacher evaluation requirements, certification requirements, and local expectations;	
6. Includes district initiatives and parental concerns; and	6. Is supported by central office and school board- trend data; and	6. Establishes classroom or on-the-job observations that are guided by and contain a checklist of best practices observed by the mentor (positive feedback); and	6. Understand broad educational issues as well as specific teaching/ education issues;	6. Includes a catalogue of resources available for beginning educators;	
7. Defines professional and district acronyms (Adequate Yearly Progress (AYO), Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP), etc.	7. Is included in broader Professional Development (PD) program evaluation (locally and on Missouri School Improvement Program reviews)	7. Encourages structured experiences and expectations for all new educators.	7. Have a strong understanding of pedagogy, instructional expertise and relevant administrative issues;	7. Recognizes the need for knowledge and strategies on classroom management;	
			8. Are available to mentor (release time, ewer additional assignments);	8. Encourages small districts to form mentoring consortia (may use existing structures to form consortia (e.g., conference schools));	
			9. Are assigned by building principals and / or local professional development committee with input from grade-level or department chair; and	9. Focuses on exemplary teaching and assessment practices;	

<p>10. Are supported in time/effort by administration and school board.</p>	<p>10. Builds working strategies that encourage problem solving and independent thinking;</p>
	<p>11. Provides understanding of student assessments and how educators can utilize them to guide instruction; and</p>
	<p>12. Includes self-assessment that identifies whether mentoring is meeting both the mentor's and protégé's expectations.</p>

**AUTHORITY: SECTIONS 160.720, 161.092 AND 161.375, RSMo Supp. 2007.\***

**Original rule filed Oct. 29, 2002, effective June 30, 2003. Rescinded and readopted: Filed Jan. 18, 2008, effective Sept. 30, 2008.**

**\*Original authority: 160.720, RSMo 2002, amended 2004; 161.092, RSMo 1963 amended 1973, 2002, 2003; and 161.375, RSMo 2007.**

**For more information regarding this rule, please contact the Professional Development Section at (573)7986.**

## **MO EES Terminology for use with Module 2-Probationary**

**Preservice** Formal and/or informal culmination of coursework, reading, conversations, research, observations, prior learning, new learning, and clinical experiences for a teacher candidate prior to securing Missouri Educator Certification and usually a minimum of a bachelor's degree

**Probationary** A professional educator's status under Missouri statute for years one through five of contracted employment in a Missouri school system which includes two years of required mentoring aligned with Missouri Mentoring Standards and confidential/non-evaluative support with focus on important professional practices and pacing particularly for new practitioners

**Novice** A new or beginning educator in his/her first few years of professional employment

**Mentor** An experienced and successful professional educator who has been appropriately trained to provide specific and timely support in order to build capacity for professional growth and development with a new and/or probationary educator per Missouri Mentoring Standards

**Mentee** A new and/or probationary educator who receives specific and timely support from an appropriately trained Mentor in order to build capacity for his/her professional growth and development

**Induction** A significant part of a school system's multi-year comprehensive professional development continuum which is designed to support the probationary teacher by reducing the intensity of transition to teaching; increasing retention of highly qualified teachers; improving the effectiveness of the teacher; and improving the achievement of his/her students

**Orientation** An initial feature of a school system's professional development continuum which includes an introduction to the profession along with acculturation, programs, services, resources, key personnel, and expectations for educators who are new and/or in their early probationary years

**1<sup>st</sup> Year Practices** High leverage professional capabilities or actions which have been identified as essential for skillful teaching and student learning that are aligned with the Missouri Teacher Standards and Quality Indicators which support ongoing professional growth and development of a teacher in his/her initial year

**2<sup>nd</sup> Year Practices** High leverage professional capabilities or actions which have been identified as essential for skillful teaching and student learning that are aligned with Missouri Teacher Standards and Quality Indicators which support ongoing professional growth and development of a teacher in his/her second year

**Retention** A numerical calculation or percentage which is determined by counting the number of educators in a school system, building, grade level, content area, etc., at the beginning of a given school year and then counting again at the beginning of the next school year and/or subsequent years to see how many of those original educators return to the same or similar positions

**Highly Qualified Teacher** Per federal guidelines.....” that teacher: 1. Has obtained full State certification as a teacher or passed the State teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the State, and does not have certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; 2. Holds a minimum of a bachelor’s degree; and 3. Has demonstrated subject-matter competency in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches, in a manner determined by the State in compliance with Section 9101 (23) of ESEA.”

**Professional Development** An ongoing comprehensive plan or process which provides for growth and improvement of professional practices for educators within a school system

**Study Group** A formal or informal collection of educators who come together to examine, share, discuss, collaborate, and reflect on readings, data, research, topics, challenges, opportunities, etc.

## The Vital Role of the Principal in Teacher Induction

Ellen Moir, *NTC Executive Director*

As I got ready to write my column for this edition of *Reflections*, my thoughts kept circling around how important a principal is when it comes to the learning that happens at a school. I don't think educators and policy makers have ever fully understood the role of principals or that role's potential as much as we do now.

Traditionally, approaches to the principalship often focus on the operational and the management aspects of the position. But I believe we are coming to embrace a much more powerful role for the "principal teacher" than ever before, and this is nowhere more evident than in the lives of beginning teachers.

We are finding that the principal can trump even in the most potent and well-designed, carefully implemented induction or mentoring effort.



The positive impact of a strong principal, who has created a caring and ambitious school learning community, will serve to retain new teachers and advance their development.

Such principals have strong instructional backgrounds and focus on the learning that is happening in each and every classroom—both the teacher's and the students'. They see themselves as

Chief Promoter of Learning as well as Chief Learner. They model curiosity, tolerance for ambiguity, and a commitment to ongoing professional growth.

Yet, it's more than a vision and a stance. These principals dedicate time and energy to getting into classrooms, learning how to observe, collect data, and analyze a teacher's practice, and then to have collegial conversations that invite

Ellen Moir with  
Oak Grove School  
District Director of  
Personnel Dr. Joel  
Ruiz Herrera and his  
son, David Herrera,  
Principal, Cesar  
Chavez Academy,  
in Ravenswood City  
Elementary School  
District, East Palo  
Alto, California

teachers to develop a sense of personal agency and take risks for the sake of improved student learning. They create rich feedback loops and engage their staff in thoughtful inquiry.

But I really don't want to frame this as just a principal issue. While it is the principal as "Leader for Learning" who has the responsibility for making this happen for entire staffs, it is the mentor's responsibility to support these professional norms and habits of mind as

*Continued on page 3*

# Convergent Coaching

## How Interactions Between the Principal, Principal Coach and Teacher Mentor Bridge the Instructional Gap

By Kitty Dixon, *Director, School/District Support and Innovation and Jenny Morgan, CA Regional Director, New Teacher Center*

A fundamental theory of action that drives the New Teacher Center’s initiative in a Bay Area program improvement school district is that intensive mentoring that is job-embedded, site-based, and integrated into ongoing district and school improvement efforts builds teacher and administrator leadership.

Furthermore, when principals, teacher mentors and principal coaches “converge” and regularly interact about current instructional trends and data, the quality of instruction and the access to quality instruction improve.

In many traditional mentoring models, the principal coach interacts almost exclusively with the coachee (principal)—interactions between a principal coach and a teacher mentor are usually informal and often guarded. Although teacher mentors often meet with a principal, the conversations may or may not address broader organizational trends.

A Convergent Coaching model consists of ongoing interactions between the principal, a site-based new teacher mentor and the principal coach. Norms of confidentiality are not breached, and the purpose is to dialogue using multiple data points. Are there trends in the instructional goals and support needed across the caseload of new teachers? What are the current strengths and gaps in teaching and learning? The following table shows sample shared data points (not attached to individual teachers):

Consider the following example:

*A principal coach is working with a second-year principal in a K–8 school with a staff that includes 14 new teachers. The principal and her leadership team use summative data to identify writing as an area for improvement. The principal coach and mentor share observation data summaries that support the leadership team’s findings. The principal, coach, and teacher mentor use this data to develop a proposal for the leadership team to implement ongoing*

*professional development in Writers’ Workshop, and individual coaching and mentoring. After a staff discussion, Writers’ Workshop is built into the School Plan and the Professional Development Calendar. The new teacher mentor attends the professional development sessions with both new and veteran teachers, and is then in a position to strategically coach around implementation issues.*

The next steps of the principal, coach and mentor are informed by their continued discussion and analysis of what the practice “on the ground” looks like. In addition to meeting with the principal, the coach and new teacher mentor meet regularly in coaching team forums that include mentors and principal coaches across the district.

Current research suggests that our efforts to close the “achievement gap” may be undermined by the term itself, which perpetuates the sense that the gap is inevitable and that it is somehow separate from funding gaps or gaps in access to quality instruction

Mentor Data Points	Principal Coach Data Points	Principal Data Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation data trends across new teacher caseload with specific instructional focus (e.g., writing instruction)</li> <li>• Summary of instructional strengths and challenges from grade level meetings (new and veteran teachers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary data from quick visits</li> <li>• Summary of trends and patterns gleaned from conversations at site and district levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School and district vision and goals</li> <li>• Summary data from quick visits</li> <li>• School-wide standardized test scores</li> </ul>

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(Ladson-Billings, 2006; Hamann et al 2008). A priority, then, is to capitalize on ways to expand our unit of change from individual teachers and individual principals to systems within and across a school site. Our experience is telling us that it is this convergence of instructional leadership that has the power to bring multiple data points and feedback into instructional decisions that impact student learning. ■



Jen Bloom, Mentor,  
Leila Minnis,  
Principal Coach,  
and Debbie  
Nemecek, Mentor,  
discuss the next  
steps for using  
data from a site  
assessment wall.

*MOIR continued from page 1*

they work with their new teachers.

We are seeing amazing things happen when principals and mentors work together to create the environments in which teachers—new along with their veteran colleagues—thrive. These are schools where all teachers are supported in being learners, in holding the vision that every child can and does learn, where inquiry into one’s practice and the use of data are simply facts of everyday professional life, and where teachers participate in professional learning communities that foster public practice

coupled with supports for teacher learning—much like the school community described in Ulli Kummerow and Marina Cook’s article on page 7.

Mike Heffner talks about sustaining the 3 C’s of communication, collaboration, and coordination in the relationship between the principal and the mentor(s) in his article on page 6, and Kitty Dixon and Jenny Morgan highlight the power of examining data together as a way of creating coaching efforts that converge for increased student learning on page 2.

Rosalie Chako and Joanne Yinger provide more specific insight into what

principals can do to support beginning teachers in their article on page 5, and

**Regardless the structures or model, effective, high-quality induction requires the active participation of the principal.**

Gary Bloom makes a case on page 4 for strengthening the coaching skills of principals as a powerful

complement to their role as supervisor/evaluator.

Regardless the structures or model, effective, high-quality induction requires the active participation of the principal. Mentors need to learn how to communicate their work without breaching mentor-teacher confidentiality, and principals need to embrace mentors as their compatriots and co-leaders for learning. Together we can make “professional learning communities” and “high-quality teaching” more than just bumper-sticker slogans! ■

# A Theory of Action for Coaching-Based Supervision

By Gary Bloom,  
NTC Associate Director

Many in the K–12 community believe with great conviction that there must be a brick wall erected between coaching/mentoring and supervising and evaluating.

Teacher mentors are trained to refrain from sharing judgments about their protégées with principals and sometimes with the protégées themselves. Peer Assistance and Review Programs, which have a strong record of building teacher professionalism and quality by engaging teachers in support and gate-keeping roles, are looked upon with ambivalence by many induction and teacher union leaders. Some traditionalists suggest that principals should be confined to evaluating, hiring, firing and managing, and if it happens at all, only those without positional authority should do teacher coaching.

At the heart of this tension is the perception that it is difficult to both nurture and support an individual while making judgments on professional or employment status. Formative and summative feedback are seen as separate. Some believe that protégées are hesitant

to share vulnerabilities and ask for help from a coach who will make a summative assessment.

This tension between coaching and supervision that exists in K–12 professional ranks disappears in the classroom. Every good teacher serves as coach, formatively assessing the

individual performance, determines who gets to play.

There is little substantive research to support either side of this debate. One thing that we can agree on is that effective supervisors both evaluate and coach.

We have developed a theory of action grounded in research and best practice,

effective supervision nested in school and district support systems. At the heart of effective supervision is Blended Coaching; a supervisor/supervisee coaching relationship is both facilitative and instructional. A supervisor serves as a coach and has positional authority and may provide both feedback and direction.

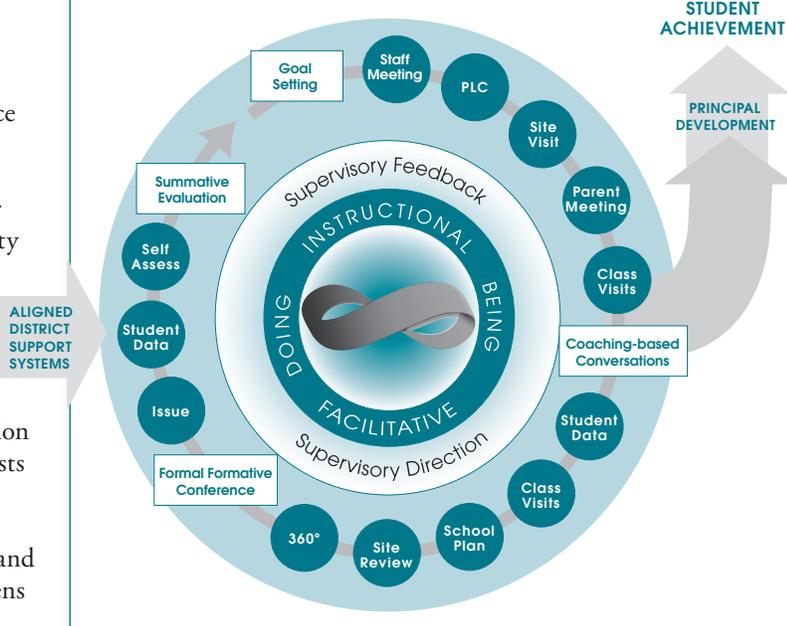
Strong coaching-based supervision processes are

- A primary responsibility and priority of the supervisor
- Informed by formative and summative data from a variety of sources
- Collaborative, iterative, and ongoing
- Have as their primary goal professional and institutional growth
- Situated in a culture of professional learning communities

The graphic to the left illustrates this theory of action.

Our schools depend upon our ability to grow effective teachers and principals. And our ability to do this successfully depends upon our willingness to invest in supervision that nurtures professional development and insures high performance. Effective supervision integrates facilitative and instructional coaching with supervisory direction and feedback. ■

A Theory of Action for the Supervision of Principals



students, and as supervisor, making judgments and offering summative assessment. The same teacher who develops a student’s mastery of calculus through daily teaching and support, gives a final grade and may write a letter of recommendation for college. The basketball coach, who helps a player improve his

which integrates coaching (formative) and supervising (summative) assessment for both principal and central office supervisor professional training.

This theory of action assumes that student achievement depends on teacher and principal quality, which grow with

# Mentors and Principals

## In Partnership for New Teacher Growth

By Rosalie Chako, *SVNTP Coordinator of Professional Development for Mentors*, and Joanne Yinger, *SVNTP Coordinator of Professional Development for Participating Teachers*

“My principal often walked through my classroom and always left a note on my desk or in my box about something I was doing well.”

—New teacher

New teachers talk with their mentor about administrator interactions, offering testimonials of the administrator’s influence on their development as confident, skilled teachers.

Mentors are committed to meet with site administrators every 4–6 weeks to ensure a better understanding of program components such as the links between district evaluation and the induction goal-setting process, the NTC Formative Assessment System (FAS), the new teacher’s professional development, and the confidentiality that is the mainstay of the mentor/new teacher relationship. New Teacher Center Induction programs encourage frequent collaboration among the teacher, mentor and administrator to cultivate a shared partnership in support of the new teacher.



Silicon Valley educators  
Rosalie Chako,  
Jireh Lee and  
Joanne Yinger

Mentors report that when administrators support the induction program’s components and promote professional “habits of mind,” the entire system is influenced and program elements become standard practice for all teachers at their sites. These administrative behaviors are cited as contributing factors:

- Protects new teachers from adjunct duties
- Visits classrooms regularly
- Teaches in classrooms so new teachers can observe colleagues at work
- Encourages new teachers’ involvement in the site’s learning community
- Values time with mentor

Mentors understand that administrators are short on time. In September, meetings for the year are calendared, emphasizing their importance. If the first meeting is challenging to schedule, mentors talk with the administrator in the corridor or on the playground; these short

meetings build trust. To ensure efficient and productive meetings, mentors use their Mentor/Administrator Log to record plans. In turn, mentors gain a better understanding of the school’s context. They may ask about ways to support the administrator in moving the teacher’s practice forward, and if the administrator indicates a concern, suggest that the administrator initiate a follow-up meeting to include the teacher.

The development of this relationship and respect for the administrator’s complicated context are frequent topics at mentor forums; mentors use facilitative and mediational language to coach each other toward building that critical relationship. Mentor/teacher confidentiality is a common challenge. To ensure confidentiality is not compromised, mentor responses and body language remain nonjudgmental. Nodding

one’s head in agreement to an administrator’s positive or negative comment about a teacher breaches confidentiality. “She is a great teacher” is not a comment to be made to an administrator, nor is sharing Collaborative Log information appropriate. Conversely, presenting facts about the class profile, content standards, teacher attendance at an IEP meeting honors discretion. In addition, respect for the differing roles of administrator and mentor, as well as their interdependence, are critical. Some projects have developed an administrator handbook to serve as a guide for ongoing administrator conversations.

Many new administrators have “come up through the chairs” of new teacher, mentor, and district coordinator. At these schools, an ongoing cycle of inquiry, case study focus and teacher collaboration are standard practice. The mentor/administrator/teacher partnership ultimately leads to greater success for students, the beneficiaries of professional collaboration. ■

# The Principal: A Key to Beginning Teacher Success

By Mike Heffner, *NTC Outreach Coordinator*

The principal has a key role in teacher induction. To close the achievement gap, it must be a top priority to create an environment where novice teachers are welcomed and nurtured to become successful. The New Teacher Center School Leadership Development Team works with administrators to create conditions that support teaching and learning.

Supporting the success of beginning teachers may be the most significant contribution the principal makes—both for the present and future. New hires are part of the principal’s legacy, shaping the school’s culture and realizing the principal’s vision. Schools with policies that address beginning teacher needs are

key to both student growth and teacher retention.

Principals have many opportunities to implement policies to support novice teachers. In placing teachers, principals must consider student needs first. Assigning beginning teachers to the most challenging classrooms (too often the case) causes frustration, self-doubt and burnout, thus perpetuating the revolving door. Placing the most talented teachers with the most challenging classes sends a clear message that in this school, learning is top priority.

Principals must be sure that the beginning teacher has as optimal a teaching environment as possible. For example, a principal who sees to it that a new high school teacher has a single room and few preps, and

does everything possible to surround that teacher with nurturing and supportive colleagues, is investing in that teacher’s success.

Ongoing induction meetings provide beginning teachers with a peer network while acclimating them to the school. A faculty handbook that is user friendly, up to date, and prioritizes key information can be invaluable.

The principal is responsible for creating an inclusive and supportive culture, one that fosters inquiry and allows opportunity for learning and mutual support. Collaborative cultures where all members share, support, and problem-solve with each other build this kind of environment. In schools where novice teachers are respected for their knowledge of new teaching strategies and research

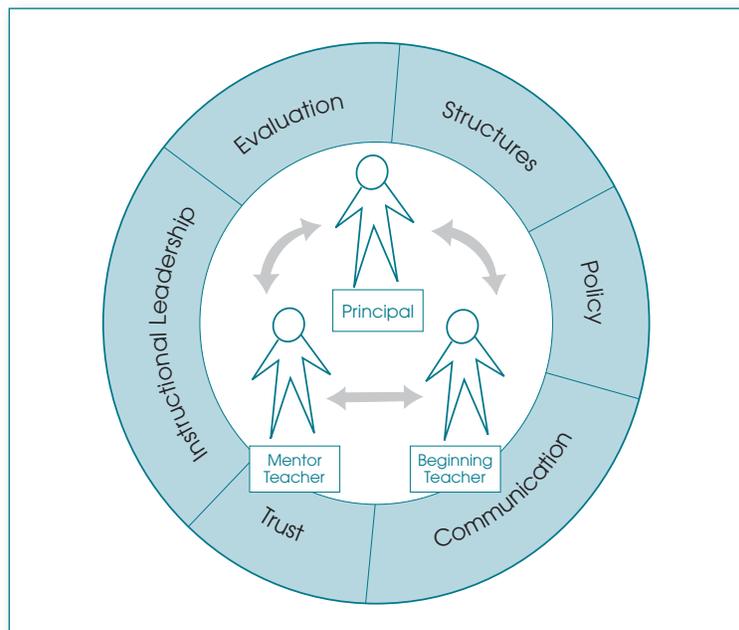
findings, everyone benefits. Experienced teachers reaffirm themselves as lifelong learners, while new teachers feel valued.

In California, and increasingly around the country, beginning teachers are working with induction mentors who support and expedite the beginning teacher’s development. A principal has a powerful opportunity to influence that work. The principal’s clear understanding and articulation of the value of the mentor’s role in induction is important. Sanctioned time for mentors and beginning teachers to meet is crucial. While the mentor teacher relationship is confidential, it is essential that the principal is part of the team. Brief monthly principal and mentor meetings sustain the three Cs—communication, collaboration and

coordination. Principals can share school-wide goals and focus while the mentor can share formative assessment structures and tools. And appropriate meetings that include the beginning teacher offer opportunities to build the relationship between the principal and the beginning teacher.

We know that it takes a community to grow and sustain high-quality teachers, and as the school leader, the principal can be a true instructional leader to play a key part in the induction of the newest members of a school. ■

This graphic illustrates six components of the inter-dependent relationship between the beginning teacher, mentor, and principal. It emphasizes its integrated and complex nature. An important role of the principal is to establish a school culture that welcomes, supports, and retains novice teachers.



## A Culture of Collaboration

By Ulli Kummerow, *Principal, Radcliff Elementary School* and Marina Cook, *Santa Cruz New Teacher Project Advisor*

**A**s principal, I have been incredibly fortunate to be working at a site with a large number of beginning teachers.

Most of these professionals have been working with full release mentors who help them with their daily classroom practice and also help them to clear their credentials. The induction program in which our teachers participate is completely aligned with my personal vision—that a school can only move forward if we focus on professional dialogue, analysis of student work and collaboration around best practice.

The collaboration of new teachers with veteran teachers is strengthened by the fact that we have had mentoring for all teachers, not only those starting out their careers. The few veterans we have on the staff have come to understand that new teachers have much to offer when it comes to looking at data, sharing strategies, and looking at next steps.

Many of the newer teachers are better versed in understanding the standards, the curriculum, and the needs of those students



learning English. They understand issues of equity and equal access. Veterans who may not be used to collaborating are working alongside those who hunger for working and learning collectively from what all participants can bring to the table.

The evaluation and supervision process in our district is completely aligned with the tools and processes used by the mentors with the beginning teachers. When we conduct our formal observations, the teachers are familiar with the tools, so there are no surprises. They have also had the opportunity to give us, the evaluators, input as to what they would like feedback on. The process is collaborative and teachers understand the standards for the teaching profession they are being evaluated on.

Marina Cook, mentor, NTP, Amy Eggleston, new teacher, and Ulli Kummerow, principal at Radcliff Elementary

I cannot imagine working at a site where we did not have this culture of collaboration, trust, and respect for teaching and learning. In the ideal, this collaborative model between new teachers, veteran teachers, administrators and mentors puts student learning at the forefront of everything we do. It moves students onto a greater stage where an entire grade level of teachers and support personnel is taking responsibility for all students, not just those on their particular class roster. ■

## New at NTC

### Books

*Professional Development for School Leadership Coaches: A Facilitator's Guide for Leadership Coaching Programs*

*Powerful Partnerships* by Gary Bloom

*Effective Teacher Induction and Mentoring: Assessing the Evidence* by Michael Strong

### Media

Mentor Conversations DVD

### Mentor Professional Development

*Mentor Assessment for Growth and Accountability: Tools and Processes for Mentors and Program Leaders*

*Differentiating Instruction: Entry Points for Mentors*

For more information, visit [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org)

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Santa Cruz, CA 95060

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We wish to thank the following organizations for their support of the New Teacher Center:

Advanced Micro Devices, Inc  
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*Reflections Staff:*

Janet Gless, Associate Director,  
New Teacher Center  
Anne Watkins, Editor  
Felton Ward Design, Design  
and Production

Printed by Community Printers,  
Santa Cruz, CA

## About The New Teacher Center

The New Teacher Center (NTC) was established in 1998 as a national resource focused on teacher and administrator induction. NTC implements and promotes induction best practices through a variety of innovative professional development opportunities and materials that assist educators and policy makers in supporting the next generation of education professionals. Using an integrated, collaborative approach, NTC strives to support essential research, well-informed policy, and thoughtful practice that encourage teacher development from pre-service throughout the career of a teacher.

### New Teacher Center

*Improving Teaching and Learning in America's Schools*



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## **A Proactive Approach...**

**SPRINGFIELD VIDEO**

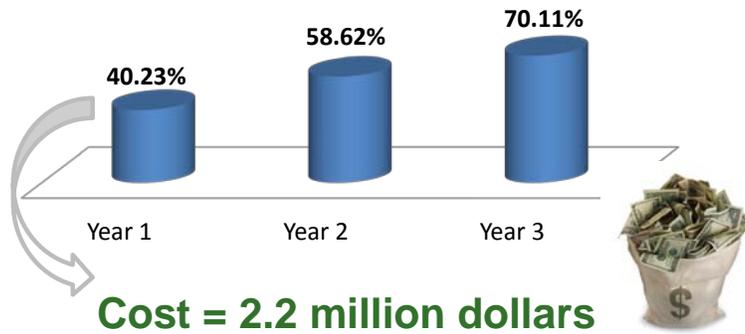
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**SLIDE 42**

-Show Video (Anita Kissinger)—no notes.

## Springfield R-XII

### ATTRITION Year 1 Teachers Employed in 2001 Leaving the District



2

#### SLIDE 43

The district started by calculating its attrition rates with attrition defined as both “leavers and movers”. This review included a study that analyzed the three-year attrition rate of the cohort of teachers hired in 2001. As you can see on the slide, the district lost 40% of these teachers at the end of their first year with a total cohort loss of 70% by the end of the third year. . In addition to this cohort attrition rate shown here, it was also determined that, on average, approximately 33% of beginning teachers were leaving at the end of their first year with the district! Business has know for a long time that attrition is costly, and when calculated for Springfield Public Schools, it was determined that the attrition of this one cohort over three years had cost the district approximately 2.2 million dollar. So, how was the fiscal impact calculated?

## Cost Configuration

Research studies estimate direct costs average 20-50% of the teacher's salary.

**Direct + Indirect Costs  
=  
150% of the Teacher's Salary!**

Source: Benner, A. D. (2000). The cost of teacher turnover. Austin, TX.: Texas Center for Educational Research.

3

### SLIDE 44

A review of the literature indicated that the **direct costs** of teacher attrition could, on average, equal 20-50% of the teachers' salaries. However, when indirect costs are also considered, the total cost can be as high as 150% of the teacher's salary. While the dollar cost is significant and important to ensuring efficient use of resources, the district also realized the potential negative impact on student learning--- and that cost was even more unacceptable.

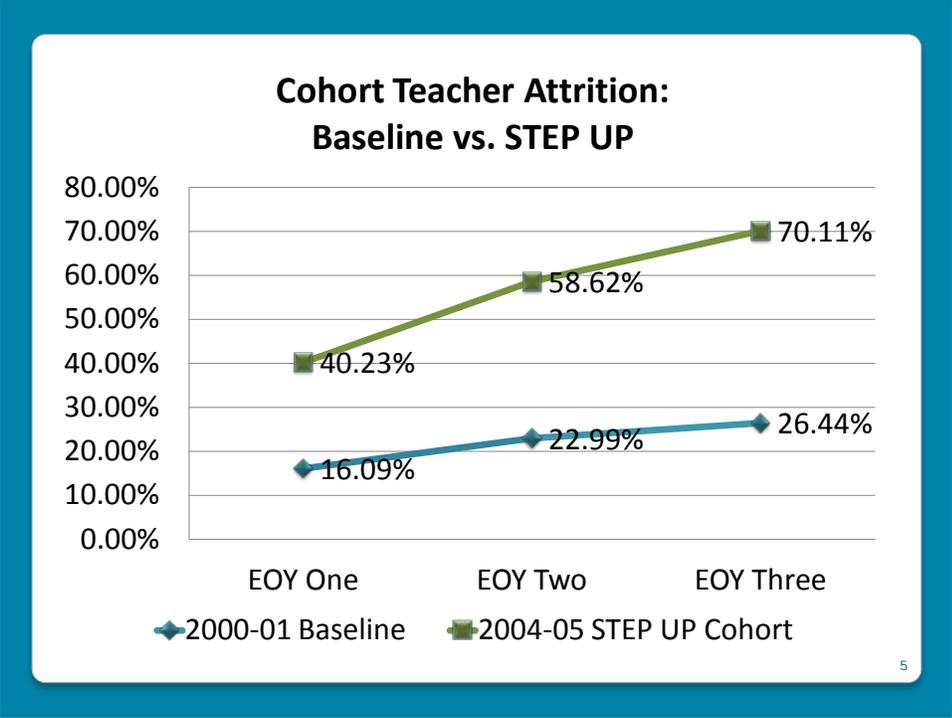
## Springfield R-XII

Prior to our induction process, we were pursuing random acts of improvement throughout instructors' career timeline. So we developed a more ***systematic approach to support our teachers***. With a limited number of resources, we knew if we aligned our resources early in their career, we could reduce the number of those exiting the district.

4

### **SLIDE 45**

The district realized that to best serve students, it needed to focus its limited resources for professional learning on a system of support—one that would build a strong foundation for early career teachers resulting in more effective teachers and lower teacher attrition rates. So, what impact did Springfield see in its early career cohort attrition rate?



**SLIDE 46**

As you can see in this example, the cohort attrition rate significantly improved for the first STEP UP cohort. In addition to this cohort comparison, the average attrition rate of **first year** teachers has improved from 33% prior to STEP UP to approximately 11% with STEP UP deployed.

As with any improvement initiative, it was important to determine how the district would measure the program effectiveness. This is only one of multiple indicators monitored to gauge program effectiveness and make improvements as needed. So, what's been the financial impact of improved attrition?

**6 Years of  
Implementation**

**Savings: \$914,954**



**STEP UP Program**

6

**SLIDE 47**

After six years of implementation, the improved attrition rates translated to an annual average savings of approximately \$900,000.

While the total amount saved would differ based on the size of a district, the relative impact on a district budget would be similar. In short, reduced attrition saves resources. Most importantly, reduced attrition coupled with improved practice, impacts students! So, how did Springfield attempt to ensure the STEP UP Induction Program retained EFFECTIVE teachers??

## Springfield R-XII Reflections

*We use research to **isolate those key practices that make the most difference** in student achievement.*

*Just as important as the attrition rate, is the **effectiveness of the new teachers** the district retains. Teachers establish their professional norms in the first three years of practice.*

*The district focused its limited resources to affect the professional practice of its **least experienced teachers**.*

7

### **SLIDE 48**

The district initially used a thorough review of research to focus on the key practices that most impact student learning and continues to systematically adjust the program as new research is published. What was evident at the time and continues to be true today is that most teachers establish professional norms during their first three years of practice. So, if early career teachers can secure foundational skills and internalize a growth mindset through reflective practice, these teachers have a higher probability of being effective throughout their careers.

Again, limited resources require organizations to define a strategic focus that is both effective and efficient. For professional learning in Springfield Public Schools, this meant focusing resources on early career teachers.

*S*upporting

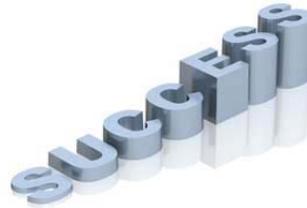
*U*ncovering

*T*eachers

*P*otential

*E*xamining

*P*ractices



**Springfield Public Schools  
STEP UP Induction Program**

8

**SLIDE 73**

Let's look again at STEP UP as one example of how a district might approach the design process for a comprehensive induction program.

## Essential Question

*What do our students need  
our beginning teachers to  
know and be able to do?*

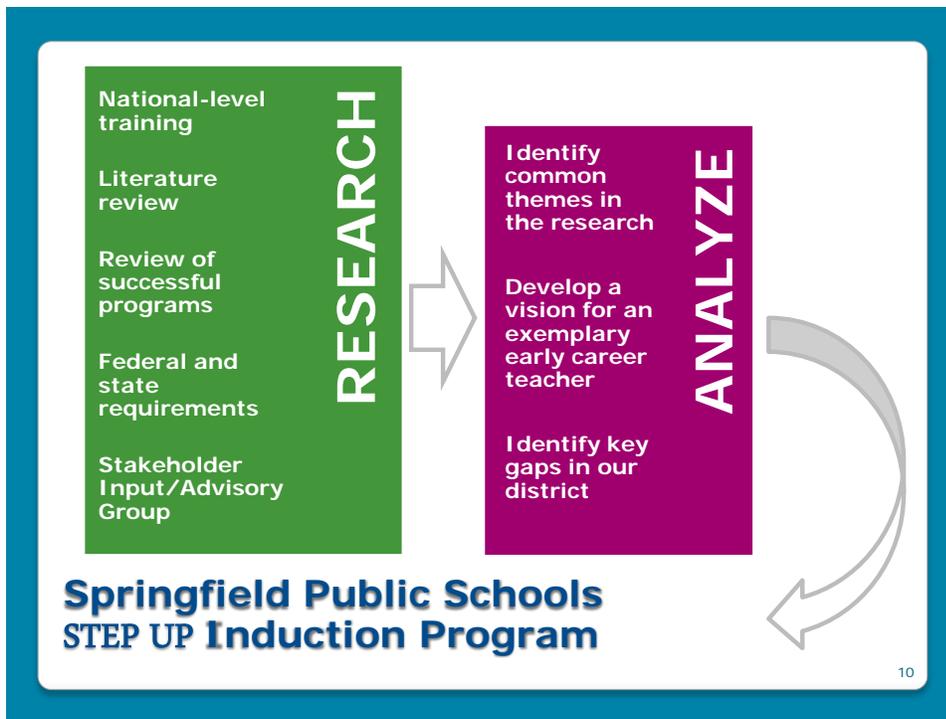
**Springfield Public Schools**

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### **SLIDE 74**

Once the data confirmed that the attrition rate of early career teachers was a critical opportunity for improvement, the district started with an improvement theory. That is, If we improve the capabilities and support for early career teachers through a systematic induction program, we will decrease attrition rates and enhance the ability to provide an exemplary teachers for every student.

Springfield then deployed a design process guided by one essential question---what do our students MOST need our beginning teachers to know and be able to do?



### **SLIDE 75**

The research component of the design process was multi-dimensional. Staff conducted extensive literature and program reviews and considered federal and state requirements to develop draft proposals for program components. This information was regularly presented to an advisory group of students, parents, community members, teachers, and leaders who provided feedback and helped refine program components.

In addition to the identification of key themes, the analysis phase of the design involved the creation of a vision for an exemplary early career teacher to more clearly define expectations. The district also reviewed student performance data to further program content and processes.

So, what key themes emerged?

## Supporting Teachers



### *Successful induction programs provide:*

- Use a tiered model
- Provide support during years one through three
- Are differentiated to address student needs and teacher needs

## Springfield Public Schools STEP UP Induction Program

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### SLIDE 76

Through the design process, Springfield learned that it was important to use a tiered model of support over multiple years. This concept implies that each year builds on the previous year which requires some consideration of what key knowledge and skills teachers need to have developed prior to learning other skills. For example, many high-yield instructional strategies require some level of student interaction. Well-established procedures and routines as well as positive relationships with and among students are necessary pre-requisites to maximize the effectiveness of instructional strategies like cooperative learning. So, a tiered model considers content scope and sequence important for developing effective instructional practices. It was also evident that it would be important to provide some level of differentiation for teachers. For example, specialty teachers have some unique needs when compared to regular classroom teachers.

**Examining Practices**

Systematically supporting each beginning teacher in researched, high yield strategies in...

- Classroom Management
- Instructional Strategies
- Continuous Classroom Improvement
- Reflective Practice and Student Input

**Springfield Public Schools  
STEP UP Induction Program**

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**SLIDE 77**

As a result of the design process, Springfield concentrated on a few key concepts. For example, classroom management focuses on relationship building as well as how to facilitate routines and procedures that support effective use of instructional time and the use of high-yield instructional strategies.

Continuous classroom improvement and reflective practice center on helping teachers learn how to determine the impact of instructional practices on student learning and behaviors.

**Supporting Teachers**

*Successful induction programs provide:*

- A common base of knowledge/skill
- Systematic mentoring
- A minimum of three classroom coaching sessions/year
- Highly trained coaches

**Springfield Public Schools  
STEP UP Induction Program**

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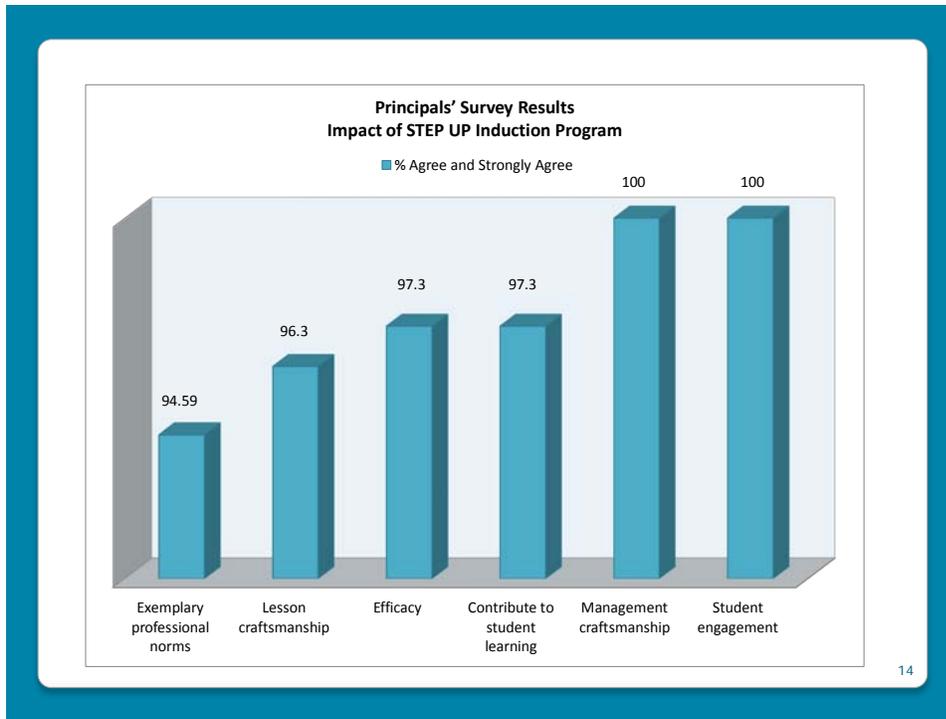
**SLIDE 78**

The content of an induction program is important, but meaningful content without an effective process is insufficient! So, it was also important for the district to consider the “how” in addition to the “what”. So, along with incorporating a common knowledge and skill base, the induction process includes:

- systematic mentoring with grade-level and/or content-like, trained mentor
- at least three Cognitive Coaching cycles in year one with a gradual release of the coaching intensity in year two
- and, highly trained CONFIDENTIAL coaches.

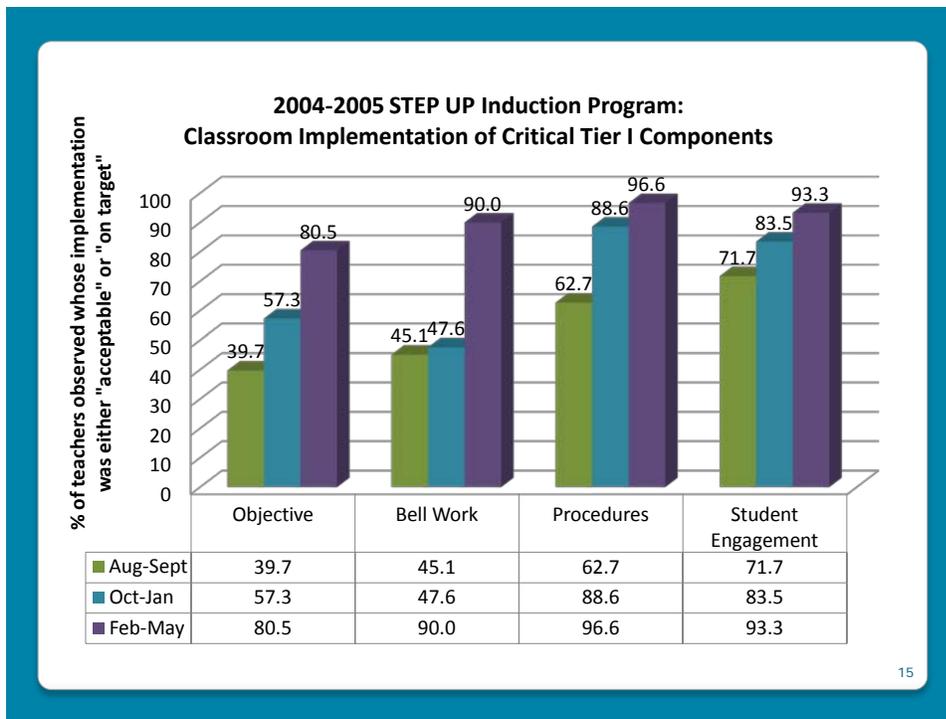
A critical theme for coaching and mentoring is **confidentiality**. The coach and/or mentor never participate in evaluations or share information about the teacher with his/her evaluator. The only exception is if the safety of students is in question.

Through the design and implementation of STEP UP, Springfield Public Schools has learned that the effective integration of content and process can contribute to the retention, satisfaction, and effectiveness of early-career teachers.



## **SLIDE 82**

In addition to designing the content and processes of the induction program, it's also important to decide how program effectiveness will be determined. For Springfield, it was obviously important to track attrition rates, but it was equally important to identify and track other indicators of success such as principal perception and implementation of key practices in the classrooms. As an example, principals are surveyed every other year to identify perceptions regarding the impact or effectiveness of STEP UP. Principals are asked to indicate their level of agreement regarding whether or not STEP UP is impacting the identified components of exemplary teaching. In this example of results, 94 to 100% of principals surveyed agreed that the induction program was positively impacting these components.



### **SLIDE 83**

In addition to principal perception, Springfield also identified what classroom data would be important to collect to determine the effectiveness of STEP UP. The purpose of this data would be to evaluate the PROGRAM—not the teachers in the program! As you can see in this example, data collection occurred at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The implementation level of four key components was determined each time to track how well the program was supporting teacher growth over the year. Such data was and is used to determine what’s working and to inform program improvements.

In conclusion, it’s important to acknowledge that your district is unique—not like Springfield. However, regardless of its size or its challenges,, every district can design an induction program that systematically develops the capabilities of early-career teachers. It can’t, won’t and/or shouldn’t look exactly like STEP UP. However, it can be designed to address the uniqueness of each district.

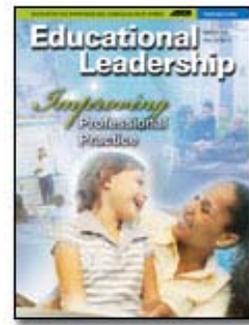
# Educator Evaluation System Training

## Module: PROBATIONARY

Refresher	Trainer Notes
Senate Bill 291 Stakeholder Involvement Teacher Standards* Quality Indicators NCLB Waiver 7 Essential Principles Pilot Project EES Website Training Roadmap (All Modules)*	
Today's Roadmap	Trainer Notes
Video: 5-Minute University Principle #3 Define Probationary Defined Developing the Probationary Teacher Ft. Zumwalt Video Intended Outcomes Terminology*	
Cannot Afford Not To...	Trainer Notes
Attrition Data Cost Data Springfield R-XII Journey Video: SPS	

<b>Differentiated Needs</b>	<b>Trainer Notes</b>
<p>Current Support for New Teachers  Activity: Needs of Years 1, 2, 3-5  Article: What New Teachers Really Need*  Use of Research to Determine Common Needs  Action Plan*</p>	
<b>Comprehensive Induction System</b>	<b>Trainer Notes</b>
<p>Comprehensive Induction Components*  Activity: CIS Self-Monitoring*  Activity: Data in this Room  Springfield STEP UP Induction Program  Video: SPS</p>	
<b>Mentoring</b>	<b>Trainer Notes</b>
<p>Mentoring Variance  Mentoring Effectiveness  Mentoring vs. Induction  Missouri Mentoring Standards*  Action Plan*</p>	
<b>Teacher Standards as Part of Induction</b>	<b>Trainer Notes</b>
<p>Three Components of Support for CIS  3 Levels of Support  Article: Role of Principals*  Year 1 Practices (Teacher Standards)*  Year 2 Practices (Teacher Standards)*  Action Plan*</p>	





### What New Teachers Really Need Scott Mandel

What first-year teachers say they need to survive on the job is often markedly different from what schools provide.

Monica quit. One year of teaching was more than enough for her. She had looked forward to teaching for years and did quite well in all of her education preservice classes. But she couldn't take it anymore. When her principal questioned her decision, she told him it was the stress. He nodded, shook her hand, wished her luck, and led her to the door.

However, it wasn't the kids. Monica related well to her students and truly enjoyed most of her classes. The stress was the result of everyday frustrations associated with her first year of teaching. No one seemed to understand what she was going through; no one was there to help her survive that first year.

Sure, the district offered her special workshops designed for new teachers. They had impressive titles and dealt with what the district considered important subjects for a teacher to master, including "Aligning Your Curriculum to the State Standards" and "Analyzing Student Data to Achieve Proficiency on State Exams." Monica dutifully went to all of these mandatory workshops. She took the handouts and placed them in the trunk of her car. Then she sat on her couch at home and tried to figure out the problems she really needed help with—how to set up her classroom for the first day, or how to teach five hours of material in three hours.

Sadly, in the long run, Monica became another first-year teacher who didn't survive. It wasn't problems with the students that did her in; it wasn't the parents. It was the inadequacies of today's system of preparing and supporting new teachers.

### **New Teacher Mentoring: A Crucial Support**

Regrettably, Monica's story is becoming commonplace. Since No Child Left Behind was enacted, school districts have felt forced to focus solely on testing. Virtually every statewide and districtwide curricular decision today is based on raising test scores. Consequently, nearly every education decision at the local school level involves "teaching to the standards." This excessive focus on testing and standards has led to a lack of focus on the practical guidance and support that would help first-year teachers stay afloat.

New teachers are not thinking about raising scores on the standardized test in May; they are more concerned about getting through fifth period tomorrow. First-year teachers have one basic goal in mind—survival. Experienced educators tend to forget what it was like when they were new to the classroom; they tend to get out of touch with what new teachers really need. And much of what new teachers need can only be provided through supportive interaction with veteran teachers.

Help from a trained, caring mentor is a crucial ingredient in helping new teachers survive their first year. Yet teacher mentoring programs are being eliminated in many states because of budget shortfalls; in California, state-funded mentoring programs have been eliminated entirely. The Los Angeles school district used to assign one experienced classroom teacher trained in mentoring to meet with every two new teachers 10 hours a month each. With recent budget cuts, the district now assigns 1 teacher to

meet with 30 new teachers in a group once a month. New teachers in this district are clearly not getting the individual attention they used to get.

Even when mentor programs are well staffed, mentors can't help first-year teachers unless they understand and provide the kinds of information and support that new professionals really need. For mentoring to truly help new teachers, the agendas for mentoring sessions need to come more from the new teacher than from the mentor. A mentor is there to make the teacher's first year easier, not to teach the new professional how to teach or to push the school district's agenda.

### **What New Teachers Want to Know**

During the last 15 years, as I have mentored new teachers and trained teacher mentors in Los Angeles schools, I asked approximately 50 other mentors about what kinds of help new teachers had requested, and what skills they had asked for help with. I also asked approximately 50 teachers in their second, third, or fourth year on the job what information and skills they had needed help with during their first year.

None of the first-year teachers said they wished they'd had more information on how to align the curriculum to state standards or on how to analyze standardized test scores. Rather, they wished that they'd had help with specific practical information and skills. The concerns of the new teachers fell within five broad areas:

- *Setting up the classroom and preparing for the first weeks of school.*
- *Covering the required curriculum without falling behind or losing student interest.*
- *Grading fairly.*
- *Dealing with parents.*
- *Maintaining personal sanity.*

### **The Classroom and the First Weeks**

The information provided in the school handbook or in orientation meetings rarely goes far enough in addressing the myriad of questions that most new teachers have in their first weeks. The new teachers I interviewed most often mentioned such questions as,

- *How do I arrange the physical classroom for the first week?*
- *What books and supplies do I need, and where can I get them?*
- *Do I have to buy them with my own money?*
- *What should I put on my bulletin boards?*
- *Do I leave them blank until I get student work?*
- *To whom do I go for help with discipline problems?*
- *How do I decide what to teach the first days and weeks of school?*
- *Should I give homework? When and how should I test students?*
- *Who is going to evaluate me—and how?*

When I mentored new teachers in our district, I suggested they keep a notepad with them at all times during their first few weeks and jot down every practical question that occurred to them. Even in the absence of a formal mentoring program, schools should at least assign a veteran teacher to each new teacher to answer practical questions like these throughout the year—and, ideally, to answer questions that the teacher doesn't yet know to ask.

## Covering the Curriculum

As the school year progresses, new teachers' questions turn to the mechanics of everyday teaching—specifically, how to keep students interested and maintain control in their classes while still covering the required material. New teachers often sense that what they are doing is not working but don't know how to fix it. Teachers begin to notice that they are calling on the same students during each class discussion or that discussions are not as rich as they had hoped. By the third month of school, new teachers realize that they are already behind in teaching the curriculum. Feeling pressure to cover the required curriculum in any possible way, teachers may cut out creative ideas they had planned to try. Deleting creativity often leads to student boredom and discipline problems.

Mentors should model curriculum planning and time management. I often share with new teachers two strategies for keeping up with required content material while keeping lessons interesting. First, I recommend combining several teaching goals in one lesson or assignment, even across disciplines. For example, if one of your language arts goals is to teach research paper writing, use one of your social studies topics for content. Second, teachers can use homework not only for review, but also to introduce new concepts. If you have four sections of a social studies text to cover, cover three in class and assign one as homework. Review the basic concepts in class the next day.

## Grading Fairly

Many teachers I interviewed said that they wished they had had more guidance on grading during their first year. New teachers want to grade according to school policy, but still be fair to their students. They want the grades to be accurate, but not to hurt a student's self-esteem. And they don't want to have to spend hours figuring out grades.

Efficient and fair grading, one of the most fundamental teacher tasks, is not a skill normally taught in education classes or new teacher workshops. Somehow, our education system seems to assume that new teachers already know effective grading techniques or can easily learn them on their own. But fair grading is complicated, as the following example shows:

A new teacher gave five tests, each worth 100 points. She graded on a scale in which 90 or above = A, 80–89 = B, 70–79 = C, 60–69 = D, and below 60 = F. One student scored as follows: 95 (A), 85 (B), 30 (F), 80 (B-), 20 (F). With an A, two Bs, and two Fs, the student expected an overall grade of C. However, when the teacher numerically averaged the five grades, she came up with an average of 62, which figured out to a grade of D-. The teacher knew that this result was mathematically correct, but it somehow didn't seem fair to this student and she didn't know why.

So they are not regularly stymied by grading dilemmas like this one, new teachers need explicit, practical training in grading techniques from professional development early in the school year or from a teacher mentor. The inexperienced teacher in this example did not realize that by using straight averages with grades, she unfairly weighted the Fs. If she converted all Fs below 50 to a straight 50 for averaging purposes, she could recalculate the student's test scores as  $95 + 85 + 50 + 80 + 50$  and divide the sum by 5. This would result in a grade of 72 or C-, a much fairer grade for this student.

## Dealing with Parents

Many of the new teachers I interviewed said they had wanted more guidance for dealing with parents, especially at conference time. Professional development for new teachers should address this need early in the school year. Mentors might, for example, role-play possible parent meeting scenarios with new teachers. I also share with new teachers the following principles for dealing with parent conferences:

- *Think of the parent as an ally, not an enemy (the golden rule of conferencing).*
- *Always begin the conference with a positive comment about the student.*
- *Insist on the presence of the student. When parents report to their child what the teacher said in the conference, the child may contradict or object to what was said; miscommunication and mistrust may result.*
- *Use positive statements when discussing the student's personal qualities. If you must make negative statements, make clear you are talking about the student's behavior, not his or her character.*
- *Be objective. Use numerical facts more than adjectives.*
- *Do not say anything you cannot defend objectively.*
- *Do not take verbal abuse. If you are not treated with respect, end the conference or send for assistance.*

## Maintaining Personal Sanity

One of the central concerns of new teachers is dealing with the daily stress of the job. New teachers need to learn how to deal with their stress as much as they need to learn how to teach. Otherwise, they burn out and leave the profession. Notice how many new teachers you see in your school's teacher lunchroom during breaks. Instead of taking breaks, new teachers often are in their rooms, trying to keep their heads above water with grading, planning, and paperwork. Working in the classroom without a break ultimately leads to physical and mental exhaustion.

A supportive mentoring relationship can ease stress, and mentors should help new teachers learn to reduce anxiety. I share the following strategies for alleviating stress with every new teacher:

- *Prepare well for your lessons.*
- *Keep your grading and paperwork up-to-date, even if you must do so before school or on a weekend. Allowing paperwork to accumulate is a great source of stress.*
- *Seek advice from experienced teachers. You will learn that your classroom problems are not unique, and that others have successfully resolved similar problems.*
- *Make a list (realistically short) of what you hope to accomplish in a day or throughout the week. There is great mental satisfaction in crossing off items.*
- *Avoid becoming isolated. Socialize with your colleagues, talking about non-school subjects, every day.*
- *Accept your mistakes as learning experiences. New teachers who never fail in their lessons are the ones who never try anything new.*

## **Practical and Ongoing Teacher Prep**

Ideally, new teachers should be taught some of these practical “survival skills” in their teacher preparation programs. Teacher education courses should address new teachers' concerns and give preservice teachers strategies for finding the answers to these kinds of questions on their first teaching assignment. Too many new teachers are being thrust into classrooms with minimal practical teaching knowledge or even actual student teaching experience. This is especially true in accelerated credential programs.

After new teachers begin teaching, their schools should continue the process of helping them meet practical classroom challenges. In addition to mentors, schools might provide monthly professional development workshops on timely issues: for example, a workshop on conducting a positive parent conference in the weeks before conferencing or a session on how to figure out grades before the first report cards are due. The content of professional development workshops must derive from the expressed needs of new teachers themselves.

New teachers' needs differ markedly from those of more experienced teachers. Keeping the status quo will only result in continued new teacher attrition. We must provide new teachers with the kind of information they most need to make it through their first year. Otherwise, we will continue to lose the Monica's of our profession.

Scott Mandel teaches English, history, and musical theater at Pacoima Middle School in Pacoima, California; 818-970-7445; mandel@pacificnet.net. He is author of *The New-Teacher Toolbox: Proven Tips and Strategies for a Great First Year* (Zephyr Press, 2003).

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YEAR 1

Prior to the Beginning of the School Year

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 1.1 – Content Knowledge**

*Description: The mentee prepares lessons to guide students to a deeper understanding of content through planned instruction that reflects an accuracy of content knowledge*

Reflection:

**Standard 2.3 – Theory of Learning**

*Description: The mentee’s planned learning activities are designed based on foundational and current learning theories and consistent with best-practice*

Reflection:

**Standard 3.1 – Implementing the Curriculum**

*Description: The mentee designs learning experiences appropriate for district curriculum and assessments*

Reflection:

**Standard 4.2 – Instructional Resources**

*Description: The mentee’s lesson design includes the use of instructional resources and the appropriate use of technology*

Reflection:

**Standard 6.1 – Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication**

*Description: The mentee demonstrates effective verbal communication skills as well as non-verbal communication (written, posted, electronic, etc.)*

Reflection:

**Standard 8.3 – Professional Responsibilities**

*Description: The mentee understands school procedures and policies and adheres to all current school procedures and district policies as stated in the district’s / school’s code of conduct*

Reflection:

**Standard 9.1 – Induction and Collegial Activities**

*Description: The mentee meets regularly with their mentor and fully participates in the district/school induction process, documenting support and growth in mentor logs aligned to the state’s mentor standards*

Reflection:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentee’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 1

First Month of the School Year

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 1.2 Engaging in Content**

*Description: The mentee identifies and uses engagement strategies to keep students interested and engaged in the content*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 2.1 Student Development (see also 2.6)**

*Description: The mentee assesses student personalities and abilities in order to design and make instructional decisions based on developmental factors*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 5.1 Classroom Management**

*Description: The mentee uses basic classroom management techniques to address misbehavior and avoid disruptions in instruction to keep students generally interested and engaged in their learning*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 5.2 Time, Space, Transitions, and Activities**

*Description: The mentee designs routines that support effective management of time, space, transitions and activities*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 6.2 Sensitivity to Student Differences (see also 2.6)**

*Description: The mentee exhibits understanding, sensitivity and empathy toward student needs and differences*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.1 Use of Assessments**

*Description: The mentee demonstrates the use of formal and informal student assessments to address specific learning goals and modifications*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 9.1 – Induction and Collegial Activities**

*Description: The mentee meets regularly with their mentor and fully participates in the district/school induction process, documenting support and growth in mentor logs aligned to the state's mentor standards*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 1

2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Months of the School Year (Quarter 1)

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 2.2 Student Goals**

*Description: The mentee establishes classroom routines and procedures that highlight student responsibility based on clear expectations*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 4.1 Critical Thinking Strategies**

*Description: The mentee demonstrates the use of various types of instructional strategies and appropriate resources resulting in student engagement in active learning to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 4.3 Cooperative, Small Group and Independent Learning**

*Description: The mentee effectively manages students and learning activities in both individual and collaborative situations*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 5.2 Time, Space, Transitions, and Activities**

*Description: The mentee designs routines that support effective management of time, space, transitions and activities*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.3 Student-Led Assessments**

*Description: The mentee orientates students to various formats of assessment connecting each to particular types of knowledge/skills*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.5 Communicates Student Progress**

*Description: The mentee maintains confidential records of student work and performance that are in order, organized and current*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentee's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 1

4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Month of School (Quarter 2)

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 1.5 Diverse Social and Cultural Perspectives**

*Description: The mentee identifies areas of potential bias in their lesson design and demonstrates the importance and appreciation of a variety of perspectives*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 2.4 Differentiated Lesson Design (see also 3.3)**

*Description: The mentee can articulate important characteristics and needs of their students as they apply to learning and designs lessons and activities based on these needs*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 3.2 Lessons for Diverse Learners**

*Description: The mentee uses learning activities that recognize individual needs of diverse learners and variations in learning styles and performance*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 6.1 Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication**

*Description: The mentee demonstrates effective and correct verbal and non-verbal communication*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.2 Assessment Data to Improve Learning**

*Description: The mentee collects data information and assessment results for instructional planning and decision-making*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.5 Communicates Student Progress**

*Description: The mentee maintains confidential records of student work and performance that are in order, organized and current*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 1

6<sup>th</sup> Month of School (Mid-Year)

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 2.5 Use of Student's Prior Experience**

*Description: The mentee plans and uses various assessment strategies to determine individual experiences, intelligences, strengths and needs*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 5.2 Time, Space, Transitions, and Activities**

*Description: The mentee adjusts routines as needed to support effective management of time, space, transitions and activities*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.4 Effects of Instruction**

*Description: The mentee uses collects information through observation of classroom interactions, higher order questioning, and analysis of student work and uses information to adjust class instruction to impact learning*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.6 Collaborative Data Analysis**

*Description: The mentee maintains data analysis information and participates in data team training or works with a mentor and/or colleagues on data analysis*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 8.1 Self-Assessment and Improvement**

*Description: The mentee engages in self-assessment, reflection and problem-solving to enhance the impact on student learning*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 9.2 Collaborating to Meet Student Needs**

*Description: The mentee works collaboratively with colleagues to build relationships to more fully understand services and support needs in the school*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 1

7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Month of School (Quarter 3)

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 1.2 Engaging in Content**

*Description: The mentee monitors and adjusts instructional strategies to maintain student engagement and interest*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 2.2 Student Goals**

*Description: The mentee uses classroom routines and procedures to promote student responsibility in setting clear personal goals and monitoring progress*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 4.3 Cooperative, Small Group and Independent Learning**

*Description: The mentee effectively manages students and learning activities in both individual and collaborative situations*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.2 Assessment Data to Improve Learning**

*Description: The mentee collects data information and assessment results for instructional planning and decision-making*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.5 Communicating Student Progress**

*Description: The mentee maintains confidential records of student work and performance and uses them when communicating student status and progress*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentee's Signature**

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**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 1

9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Month of School (Quarter 4)

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 2.5 Use of Student’s Prior Experience**

*Description: The mentee plans and uses various assessment strategies to determine individual experiences, intelligences, strengths and needs*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.4 Effects of Instruction**

*Description: The mentee collects information through observation of classroom interactions, higher order questioning, and analysis of student work and reflects on impact of class instruction on learning*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.6 Collaborative Data Analysis**

*Description: The mentee maintains and uses data analysis information, participates in data team training and works with a mentor and/or colleagues on data analysis to benefit student learning*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 8.1 Self-Assessment and Improvement**

*Description: The mentee engages in self-assessment and problem-solving to reflect on their overall impact on student learning and documents appropriately in a professional development plan or growth plan*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 9.1 Induction & Collegial Activities**

*Description: The mentee meets regularly with a mentor to reflect on strengths and growth opportunities for next year and documents appropriately in mentor logs and/or professional development plans*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentee’s Signature**

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**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor’s Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 1

End of School

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 8.1 Self-Assessment and Improvement**

*Description: The mentee's professional development plan documents self-assessment and reflection strategies used throughout the year and engages in self-assessment and problem-solving to begin planning for next year*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 8.2 Professional Learning**

*Description: The mentee uses mentor as a source of information and becomes aware of available professional learning resources; professional growth plan has been maintained and documents focus and priority areas drawing on the first year and planning for the second year*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentee's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 2

Prior to the Beginning of the School Year

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 1.1 – Content Knowledge**

*Description: The mentee prepares lessons to guide students to a deeper understanding of content through planned instruction that reflects an accuracy of content knowledge*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 1.3 Disciplinary Research and Inquiry Methodologies**

*Description: The mentee demonstrates an understanding of research and inquiry methodologies*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 3.1 – Implementing the Curriculum**

*Description: The mentee designs coherent learning objectives and experiences appropriate for district curriculum and assessments*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 4.2 – Instructional Resources**

*Description: The mentee's lesson design includes the use of instructional resources and the appropriate use of technology*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 9.1 – Induction and Collegial Activities**

*Description: The mentee meets regularly with the mentor to plan for the second year*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentee's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 2

First Month of the School Year

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 1.2 Engaging in Content**

*Description: The mentee identifies and uses engagement strategies to keep students interested and engaged in the content*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 1.4 Interdisciplinary Instruction**

*Description: The mentee makes connections between various content areas which are logical and add to overall learning resulting in students understand the meaning of inter-disciplinary content connections*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 2.6 Language, Culture, Family, Community Values**

*Description: The mentee collects and reviews demographic and biographical data of students and modifies instructions and learning activities based on particular student characteristics*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 5.1 Classroom Management**

*Description: The mentee uses basic classroom management techniques to address misbehavior and avoid disruptions in instruction to keep students generally interested and engaged in their learning*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 5.2 Time, Space, Transitions, and Activities**

*Description: The mentee designs routines that support effective management of time, space, transitions and activities*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 6.4 Technology and Media Communication Tools**

*Description: The mentee plans for and uses technology and media communication tools to enhance the learning process resulting in students using technology effectively during instructional activities*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.1 Use of Assessments**

*Description: The mentee demonstrates the use of formal and informal student assessments to address specific learning goals and modifications*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 2

2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Months of the School Year (Quarter 1)

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 2.2 Student Goals**

*Description: The mentee establishes classroom routines and procedures that highlight student responsibility based on clear expectations*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 4.1 Critical Thinking Strategies**

*Description: The mentee demonstrates the use of various types of instructional strategies and appropriate resources resulting in student engagement in active learning to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 4.3 Cooperative, Small Group and Independent Learning**

*Description: The mentee effectively manages students and learning activities in both individual and collaborative situations*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 5.2 Time, Space, Transitions, and Activities**

*Description: The mentee designs routines that support effective management of time, space, transitions and activities*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.3 Student-Led Assessments**

*Description: The mentee orientates students to various formats of assessment connecting each to particular types of knowledge/skills*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.5 Communicates Student Progress**

*Description: The mentee maintains confidential records of student work and performance that are in order, organized and current*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentee's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 2

4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Month of School (Quarter 2)

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 3.2 Lessons for Diverse Learners**

*Description: The mentee uses learning activities that recognize individual needs of diverse learners and variations in learning styles and performance*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 3.3 Instructional Goals and DI Strategies**

*Description: The mentee assesses lesson plans relative to long and short-term goals to accomplish curriculum standards and delivers instruction demonstrating differentiation strategies*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 5.3 Instructional Goals and DI Strategies**

*Description: The mentee engages in practices to learn the culture of the school and community to create a classroom learning environment structured to build positive student relationships and culture*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.2 Assessment Data to Improve Learning**

*Description: The mentee collects data information and assessment results for instructional planning and decision-making*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.5 Communicates Student Progress**

*Description: The mentee maintains confidential records of student work and performance that are in order, organized and current*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentee's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 2

6<sup>th</sup> Month of School (Mid-Year)

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 2.5 Use of Student's Prior Experience**

*Description: The mentee plans and uses various assessment strategies to determine individual experiences, intelligences, strengths and needs*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.4 Effects of Instruction**

*Description: The mentee collects information through observation of classroom interactions, higher order questioning, and analysis of student work and uses information to adjust class instruction to impact learning*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.6 Collaborative Data Analysis**

*Description: The mentee maintains data analysis information and participates in data team training or works with a mentor and/or colleagues on data analysis*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 8.1 Self-Assessment and Improvement**

*Description: The mentee engages in self-assessment, reflection and problem-solving to enhance the impact on student learning*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 9.3 Cooperative Partnerships Supporting Learning**

*Description: The mentee engages in opportunities to develop relationships with students, families and the community and works to understand concerns and needs regarding student learning and well-being*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentee's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 2

7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Month of School (Quarter 3)

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 1.2 Engaging in Content**

*Description: The mentee monitors and adjusts instructional strategies to maintain student engagement and interest*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 6.3 Speaking, Writing and Other Media**

*Description: The mentee plans and uses classroom activities which include, where appropriate, learner expression in speaking, writing, listening and the use of other media adhering to district policy*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.2 Assessment Data to Improve Learning**

*Description: The mentee collects data information and assessment results for instructional planning and decision-making*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.5 Communicating Student Progress**

*Description: The mentee maintains confidential records of student work and performance and uses them when communicating student status and progress*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentee's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 2

9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Month of School (Quarter 4)

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 7.4 Effects of Instruction**

*Description: The mentee collects information through observation of classroom interactions, higher order questioning, and analysis of student work and reflects on impact of class instruction on learning*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 7.6 Collaborative Data Analysis**

*Description: The mentee maintains and uses data analysis information, participates in data team training and works with a mentor and/or colleagues on data analysis to benefit student learning*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 8.1 Self-Assessment and Improvement**

*Description: The mentee engages in self-assessment and problem-solving to reflect on their overall impact on student learning and documents appropriately in a professional development plan or growth plan*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 9.1 Induction & Collegial Activities**

*Description: The mentee meets regularly with a mentor to reflect on strengths and growth opportunities for next year and documents appropriately in mentor logs and/or professional development plans*

*Reflection:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentee's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*

YEAR 2

End of the School Year

Academic Year \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard 8.1 Self-Assessment and Improvement**

*Description: The mentee's professional development plan documents self-assessment and reflection strategies used throughout the year and engages in self-assessment and problem-solving to begin planning for next year*

*Reflection:*

**Standard 8.2 Professional Learning**

*Description: The mentee uses mentor as a source of information and becomes aware of available professional learning resources; professional growth plan has been maintained and documents focus and priority areas drawing on the first year and planning for the second year*

*Reflection:*

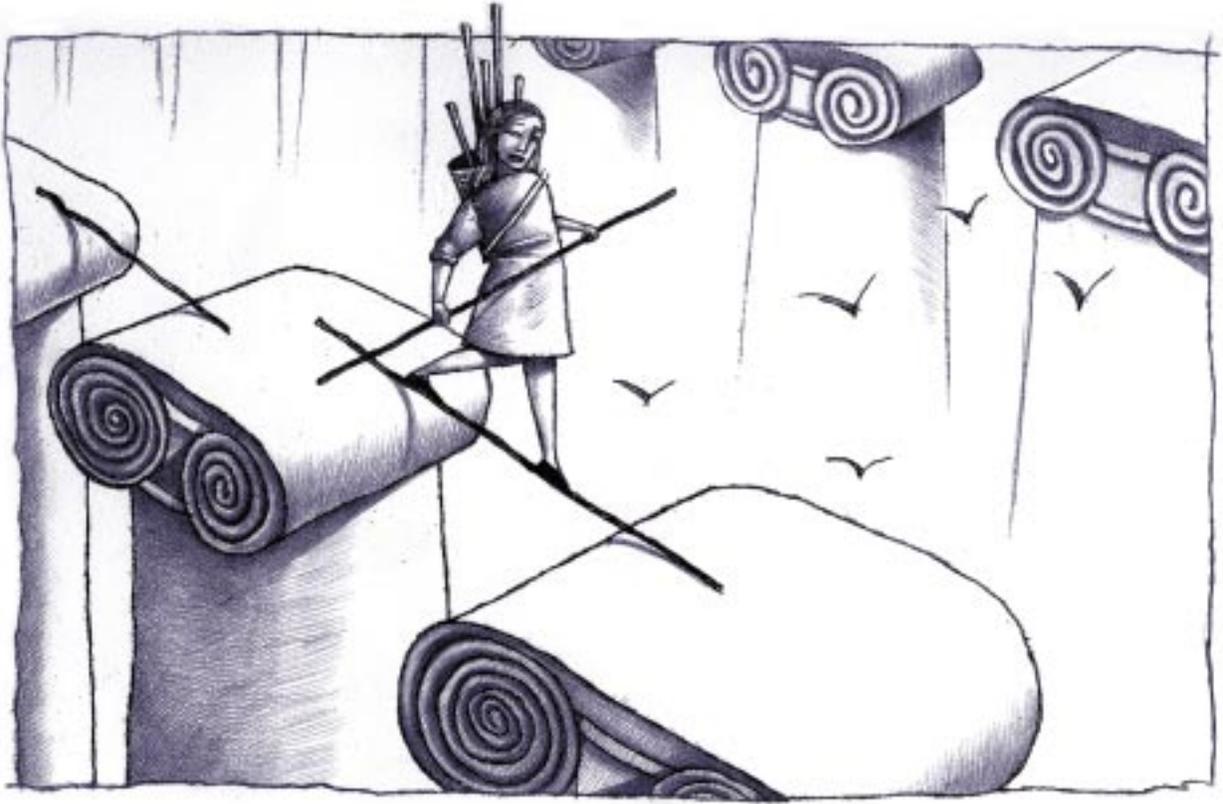
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**Mentee's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*Signatures indicate that the mentee and mentor have discussed these areas.*



Whitney Sherman

*Lifelines to the classroom:*

## DESIGNING SUPPORT for BEGINNING TEACHERS

*A third of beginning teachers quit within their first three years on the job. We don't stand for this kind of dropout rate among students, and we can no longer afford it in our teaching ranks. But what does it take to adequately support novice teachers? What lifelines can we offer so they will remain in the profession and develop into highly effective classroom educators?*

Written by  
Kendyll Stansbury  
Joy Zimmerman

**WestEd**

*Improving education through  
research, development, and service*

In education, as in any employment area, each year produces a certain number of newly minted professionals. But due to the particular circumstances of our time, the annual influx of newcomers to the teaching profession needs to rise dramatically in the coming decade. On one side of the profession's complex supply-demand equation is a fast dwindling reservoir of our most highly experienced teachers. Hired in large numbers in the 1960s and '70s to teach a booming student population, these veterans have started reaching the natural end of their careers. One increasingly typical result is the experience of a San Francisco elementary school that, last year, lost all three of its kindergarten teachers to retirement.

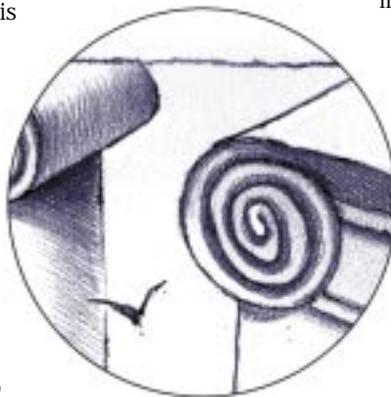
On the demand side of the equation is an expanding student population, coinciding with a proliferation of class-size reduction initiatives that require schools to lower their teacher-student ratio in certain grades. Many urban and rural schools, scrambling to hire coverage for additional classrooms, have had difficulty finding enough fully credentialed teachers. As a result, many students are being taught by someone with an emergency teaching credential.

Further complicating the picture is the profession's ongoing "brain drain," the steady loss of teachers who, after a relatively short time in the classroom, give up on the profession, opting instead for jobs that offer more financial reward or may simply appear less stressful.

By one estimate, U.S. schools will need to hire anywhere from 1.7 to 2.7 million new teachers within the next decade (Hussar, 1999). Others argue that the numbers are far smaller. But either way, many districts and schools throughout the country can look forward to a significant influx of new teachers in the coming years — a situation that presents both a challenge and an opportunity.

The challenge, of course, is to give these newcomers the kind of support needed if they are not only to remain in the profession, but to develop into the kinds of educators able to teach to today's high standards. The definition of effective teaching has changed greatly in recent years. Today's teachers are expected to help the most diverse student population in our history meet the highest education standards we have ever set. And, in the process, they are expected to serve *all* students equally well.

The opportunity lies in the fact that updating old skills or unlearning old habits — a necessity for many veterans — is not an issue for these fresh-on-the-scene teachers. Still in the early stages of learning their craft, they have the opportunity to begin their careers using the best of what we know from research and practice about effective teaching.



Beginning teacher support programs, also referred to as teacher induction programs, can help schools and districts meet this challenge and take advantage of the opportunity it presents. Minimally, such programs can improve teacher retention rates by enhancing new teacher satisfaction. More importantly, a well-designed and implemented effort can improve practice, helping new educators apply the theoretical knowledge acquired in their teacher preparation programs to the complexity of real-life teaching. Not incidentally, such support programs can also serve as a drawing card in the increasingly competitive market for hiring new teachers.

Some educators have also come to think of beginning teacher support as a simple fairness issue. One district superintendent now working with the local teachers' union to develop a support program explains its genesis: "We'd been hiring a lot of new teachers, expecting a lot, and then holding them accountable *after* the fact — when we evaluated them at the end of the year. The list of things new teachers are expected to know and be able to do has only grown in recent years, but they usually don't get any attendant support."

A great deal of research literature documents the extent to which beginning teachers struggle in their early classroom years. Veenman's (1984) classic international review of perceived problems among beginning teachers found remarkable consistency, across both time and differently structured education systems. Among the greatest challenges perceived by rookie teachers were classroom management, motivation of students, dealing with the individual differences among students, assessing student work, and relations with parents.

In a current international study funded by the National Science Foundation, WestEd researchers Ted Britton and Senta Raizen, along with Lynn Paine of Michigan State University, are finding that, in countries as different as China, New Zealand, and Switzerland, today's new teachers express these very same problems as being the most pressing difficulties they face (Britton, Paine, & Raizen, 1999).

In teaching, new entrants, fresh out of professional training, assume the exact same responsibilities as 20-year veterans. In doing so, they are also undertaking a remarkably complex endeavor, involving as it does the simultaneous management of multiple variables, including student behavior, intellectual engagement, student interaction, materials, physical space, and time. While many novice teachers have had terrific intellectual preparation and an outstanding student teaching experience, their limited experience generally yields an equally limited repertoire of classroom strategies — far more limited than the variety of teaching challenges a new teacher invariably encounters. It's a situation ripe for frustration.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, the attrition rate for beginning teachers has always been extremely high, with nearly a third of novice teachers leaving the profession within their first three years. Inner-city and rural schools find it especially hard to retain teachers. This revolving door creates a permanent core of inexperienced teachers who are learning their craft by, essentially, practicing on the students before them. At the schoolwide level, high teacher turnover drains energy and resources as well, requiring that administrators and teaching colleagues constantly focus on bringing newcomers up to speed on everything from operating the copy machine to participating in major reform efforts.

When new teachers turn away from their profession, their years of teacher preparation are rendered useless, a waste both of their personal resources and of the governmental resources that subsidize such training. At the same time, of course, their departure further exacerbates existing teacher shortages.

The 1980s and '90s generated a growing number of teacher induction programs aimed at helping beginning teachers make a successful

transition from their teacher preparation experience to being the teacher-of-record in a classroom. Among the common goals of such programs are:

- improving teaching performance;
- increasing the retention of promising beginning teachers;
- promoting the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers;
- satisfying mandated requirements for induction and/or licensure; and
- transmitting the culture of the system to beginning teachers (Huling-Austin, 1990).

**G**ood support  
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 new teachers  
 will stay the  
 course.

Most such programs identify beginning teachers as those who are either fresh out of a teacher preparation program or who have been teaching only one or two years. But, increasingly, districts and schools recognize the need to also offer some degree of support for teachers who, while not new to the classroom per se, are new to the school, the district, or the state.

For districts or schools undertaking — or expanding — an organized support effort for beginning teachers, it helps to understand the range of strategies that have been tried in the past and what the available data, limited as they are, suggest about the effectiveness of such strategies. This brief outlines the general types of support that can be offered to beginning teachers, strategies of varying intensity for offering such support, institutional conditions that increase the effectiveness of these strategies, and typical challenges in the implementation of teacher induction programs. (Note: This brief focuses on support for teachers who have completed a formal preparation program, not on the increasing number of “alternative-route” teachers who have been hired without such preparation and are expected to receive their initial teacher training while on the job.)

## Types of Support

Beginning teacher support should be looked at as a continuum, starting with personal and emotional support, expanding to include specific task- or problem-related support and, in the ideal, expanding further to help the newcomer develop a capacity for critical self-reflection on teaching practice. Each aspect of support serves a different purpose.

### Personal and Emotional Support

The first years of teaching are especially stressful as beginning teachers face the emotional challenges of adapting to a new workplace and new colleagues — from simply figuring out where things are located to learning policies and procedures, finding kindred spirits, and, generally speaking, getting the lay of the land. Fatigue is another constant for new teachers. “Free” time during their official workday is scarce, and planning and other preparation invariably spills over into their personal time. The effort of planning every lesson from scratch, teaching with unfamiliar materials, and, often, teaching at an unfamiliar grade level drains even the most energetic new teachers. Compounding all this is the inherent isolation of individual teachers sequestered in their individual classrooms.

At this emotionally challenging time, more experienced colleagues can play an important role, serving as a sounding board and assuring beginners that their experience is normal, offering sympathy and perspective, and providing advice to help reduce the inevitable stress. While this type of support does little to directly improve teaching performance, it does much to promote beginning teachers’ personal and professional well-being and to transmit the culture of teaching. In the process, such support also improves the likelihood that new teachers will stay the course long enough to have the *opportunity* to become more effective teachers.

### Task- or Problem-Focused Support

Beginning teachers also need help in knowing how to approach new tasks and in solving specific problems that crop up in their teaching. They are usually undertaking even the most basic teaching tasks for the very first time: developing lesson plans, planning what to say at back-to-school night, deciding what goes in the gradebook to determine grades at the end of nine weeks, and structuring parent-teacher conferences. Seasoned teachers can guide beginners in planning and accomplishing these tasks effectively; with the help of a veteran teacher, the beginner doesn’t have to reinvent the wheel for such standard activities. Veterans can also share the sometimes-unwritten expectations associated with such tasks in a given school, district, or state.

Critical self-reflection can lead directly to improved learning in a new teacher’s classroom.

In similar fashion, attentive mentors can alert new teachers to the customs of the broader school community — everything from expectations about how quiet the corridors should be when students pass between classes to the prevailing expectations of local parents regarding parent participation in the classroom. For example, in one school, teachers might consider the faculty lounge completely off-limits to parents, while at another the lounge might double as a meeting room for parent-teacher conferences. While such conventions might not be “make-or-break” issues

for new teachers, understanding them can go a long way toward making life easier.

Beginning teachers also need help in dealing with teaching challenges specific to their own students: What materials are appropriate for Maria who always finishes the assigned tasks early? What can be done to help Jeff, a special needs student, and Ming Lee, an English learner, while keeping the rest of the class productively engaged? And what can be tried when a new teacher has exhausted his or her repertoire for teaching students how to add fractions — when, for example, manipulatives, pictures, and even step-by-step instruction have achieved only limited success? By looking at such challenges from

the perspective of experience or by drawing from a larger repertoire of instructional strategies and materials, veteran teachers can help beginners identify a larger range of possible solutions. This type of problem-specific support can improve teaching performance in specific instances and, as a by-product, reduce new teachers' stress levels.

### Critical Reflection on Teaching Practice

Veterans' support in dealing with specific problems can help beginners expand their repertoire of strategies — from instructional delivery to classroom management to assessment — and help broaden the perspective from which newcomers view problems. But problem-specific support may do little to foster rookie teachers' independent problem-solving abilities. If teachers are to become skilled at independently identifying and addressing the idiosyncratic learning problems of their students, they must learn to reflect critically on student work, as well as on their own teaching practices.



Efforts to support such self-reflection often start out with a relatively directive approach. In some instances, veteran teachers may need to help identify and then prioritize issues that warrant new teachers' reflection. Left to their own devices, novices may not even recognize the most pressing issues on which to focus their attention.

For beginners who have not developed the habit of reflecting on their own teaching, the veteran may model self-reflection: identifying a problem and proposing and analyzing *for* the beginner a variety of solutions. In doing so, the veteran can help the beginner think in terms of being guided by evidence, for example, how will you *know* that your students have learned what you're trying to teach? Then, as the novice begins to develop more self-confidence and efficacy, the veteran may continue to propose solutions, but prompt the beginning teacher to analyze them himself or herself. Eventually, the beginner will be expected to autonomously propose

and analyze various options for addressing a particular issue. Over time, the veteran reduces the amount of guidance offered and engages more as an interested and sympathetic colleague, shifting from a directive to collaborative to facilitative role.

The overall aim is to build beginning teachers' autonomous ability to prioritize the most challenging aspects of their teaching experience; consider alternative approaches to dealing with a given challenge; identify and analyze the evidence that provides the most information about a particular problem; and consider alternative solutions that can be quickly implemented. (One specific and well-known technique for providing this type of support is "cognitive coaching.") In the short run, beginning teachers profit by solving *particular* problems; but in the long run, they profit by knowing

how to think constructively about *any* problem that comes up in their teaching.

The critical self-reflection engendered by this type of coaching can lead directly to improved teaching and learning in the beginning teacher's classroom. In the best-case scenario, such coaching can also have a broader impact, fostering in both coach and new teacher a bent toward action-oriented collegial discussion. When a critical mass of teachers at one school are comfortable talking with each other about their teaching, the school's capacity to identify and address problems in student learning and other important issues rises dramatically. This kind of dialogue allows everyone at the school to transcend the details of individual classrooms and to see the big picture of what's going on at a school or across a particular grade level. One teacher who notices that her fifth graders don't understand place value may assume the problem is idiosyncratic to her classroom. But when all the fifth grade teachers at a school come together to discuss teaching and learning in their classrooms and realize that a disproportionate number of their students don't understand place value, the school can more effectively address both the immediate problem and its causes.

## Specific Support Strategies

New-teacher support programs may be operated by school districts or by consortia of districts, either on their own or, sometimes, in partnership or association with the local teachers association. A state department of education may also offer a beginning teacher support model, as is true of California, which provides some implementation funding as well. But schools can also do much on their own. One Nevada high school principal, who has implemented a fairly complex teacher induction program at her school, notes, “we can do most of the things we need to do to support our new teachers with only the tacit support of the district — although it would be nice to have its active involvement.”

The amount of resources schools and districts are able and willing to devote to beginning teacher support varies, of course. Some states give districts funds specifically for teacher induction programs or for a specific type of mentor teacher program in which mentor responsibilities focus on beginning teacher support rather than on curriculum development or special projects, for example. Often, mentor monies are used to release mentor teachers from their own classrooms part-time, but some districts have found it more effective to target the funds differently. In California, for example, the state has given waivers that allow a district to support a smaller number of mentor teachers but have each of them work full time to support new teachers. Veteran teachers who do not have to balance both classroom and mentoring responsibilities have more time to focus on the beginning teachers, are more flexible, and, often, can respond to problems in a more timely way.

Not surprisingly, the amount of available funding often affects the choice of activities that are included in a teacher induction program. Some activities are low intensity and relatively low cost, being either one-shot or low-frequency events. As such, they require short-term but focused coordination. Others are higher intensity, tend to be costlier, require sustained attention, and, often, must be coordinated with other school or district activities.

## Low-Intensity Support Strategies

Low-intensity support strategies make minimal demands on district and school resources. Some are simply procedural, such as providing formal orientation or protecting new teachers from extracurricular responsibilities. Others require the involvement of veteran teachers in mentoring or collegial roles. When veteran teachers’ involvement can be structured in ways that do not impinge on their regular teaching time — in grade-level meetings, for example — districts consider such strategies to be low intensity. Even strategies that pay stipends are considered low intensity so long as the veterans are not pulled from their classrooms. Beginning teachers, on the other hand, experience even low-intensity efforts as highly valuable when those strategies feature lots of contact with veteran teachers, contact that generally provides personal or emotional support and that helps them address the unfamiliar tasks and problems they encounter as first-time teachers. Studies suggest that such support from veteran teachers results in higher job satisfaction and higher retention rates for beginning teachers (Dianda et al., 1991; Wong-Park, 1997).

All of the activities below qualify as low-intensity support and can be implemented in some form by a school with little or no district involvement or funding.

*Orienting new teachers.* The week before school, beginning teachers receive a formal orientation to the community, district, curriculum, and school. One district uses school buses to give a tour of the community, with special attention to community agencies and the neighborhoods where students live. Orientation is also an opportunity to give an overview of curricular and school/district philosophy, share special emphases for the year, and point out important features of curriculum materials. Some districts include advice on setting up the classroom and/or classroom management. Also helpful are booklets or other handouts that document in ready form some important information, such as district policies or a calendar of key events.

*Matching beginning and veteran teachers.* The pairing of a beginning teacher with a veteran teacher is a hallmark of most teacher induction programs. Whether this pairing is considered to be a low- or high-intensity effort depends on the degree of support the veteran teacher is expected to provide. In low-intensity programs, the experienced teacher is likely to function primarily as a buddy or, as one superintendent describes it, “a cheerleader,” providing emotional support. In many such instances, the veteran teacher receives no release time and, therefore, doesn’t have the opportunity to actually observe the new teacher in action. Even so, some offer enormous amounts of time and attention, often well beyond that for which they are compensated — assuming they receive any compensation at all.

Typically, novice teachers are urged to contact the veterans with any problems that arise. But some beginners are reluctant to bring problems to the attention of their support providers, either because they are embarrassed or because they don’t want to be a burden, especially if novices know that the providers are receiving little or no compensation. Any type of pairing strategy is strengthened when the veteran teacher receives a stipend and the pair is expected to set aside a regular time each week to meet together. Studies suggest that without regular, structured time set aside, paired teachers have less interaction. Matching the pair by grade level or content area also increases both the likelihood of regular interaction and the effectiveness of the support.

Clarification of veteran teachers’ responsibilities is important. One Arizona school district operates both a one-on-one “buddy” program and a mentor program. In the low-intensity buddy program, new teachers are matched with veteran teachers whose job it is to “show them the ropes,” such as how to obtain supplies or send down the lunch count. By contrast, mentors must be endorsed by their principals as “master teachers,” and they are trained in specific coaching techniques. In this high-intensity



program, mentors are then matched with and receive release time to observe and work with several new teachers.

*Adjusting working conditions.* Unless specific administrative steps are taken to protect them, beginning teachers often end up with the toughest assignments. To make life less stressful for them, administrators can reduce the number of students in beginners’ classrooms, refrain from assigning them the most challenging students, and minimize their extracurricular and committee assignments. At the elementary school level, in particular, administrators can avoid assigning combination grades. At the secondary school level, administrators can make sure that new teachers’ course schedules require as few separate preparation efforts as possible. They can also avoid assigning schedules that require new teachers to change classrooms during the day. In this era of tight resources, it must also be said that beginning teachers, especially, suffer when classrooms are not adequately stocked with textbooks, desks, supplementary materials, and basic supplies.

Given the abundance of school reform efforts, a common hazard for today’s beginning teachers is the sheer number of professional development activities in which they’re expected to participate. At one California school, for example, beginning teachers have been expected to participate in regularly scheduled workshops aimed specifically at beginning teachers, in intensive early literacy training over several weeks, and in weekly staffwide discussions about how to collaborate with a university in transforming their school into a professional development school. The importance of each of these specific activities notwithstanding, the demands of so many commitments can be tiring even for veteran teachers; for beginners they can be overwhelming, undermining both the effectiveness and morale of a teacher.

Principals can protect beginning teachers from getting spread too thin by helping them prioritize their time spent in professional development and by excusing them from all but the most essential activities. They can also help beginning teachers choose and focus on a single, important theme, such as literacy instruction in the example above, that might run through multiple events.

*Promoting collegial collaboration.* Some schools have existing structures that foster collaboration between beginning and veteran teachers, such as grade-level teams that coordinate instructional planning. Such teams provide some degree of structure and support for beginners who are just learning how to plan curriculum and instruction. For some schools, class size reduction has ended up creating another natural opportunity for ongoing collaboration between veteran and novice teachers. Rather than creating multiple classes with 20 students each, schools with limited space often respond to class-size-reduction mandates by forming one class of 40 taught by two teachers. When one of those two is a veteran and the other a beginner, it's an ideal opportunity for a mentor-like relationship. Principals can also simply ask a veteran teacher to plan together with a beginner who is teaching the same grade or the same course. At the secondary school level, this joint planning can be facilitated by common prep periods.

Study groups focused on specific topics, such as using running records or improving mathematics instruction, provide beginning teachers with collaborative problem-solving models. In such groups, novices hear how veteran teachers think about using and adapting instructional techniques.

It's helpful to remember that beginning teachers can also serve as important resources for a school. New teachers may well know more than veteran teachers about certain instructional approaches, having studied new techniques in their teacher

preparation coursework and used them in student teaching. In certain disciplines — the sciences, for example — a new teacher may also have more current content knowledge than a colleague who has been teaching for 10 or 15 years. Here, again, collaboration profits everyone.

### High-Intensity Support Strategies

Research from the California New Teacher Project, a varied set of induction programs, indicates that high-intensity support strategies, such as those described below, are more effective than the less intensive strategies at improving beginning teaching performance (Dianda et al., 1991). For this research, teaching performance was measured on a number of dimensions, including the complexity of academic assignments, percentage of students engaged, long-term planning of curriculum and instruction, range of instructional materials used, use of state/district guidelines and frameworks, and ability to reflect on teaching practices.

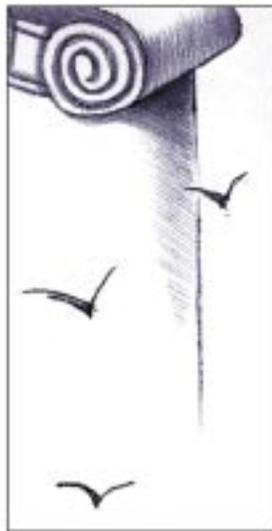
Sometimes  
fixated on the  
need to improve,  
beginners must  
be reminded of  
their strengths.

As with low-intensity efforts, here, too, veteran teachers are a key ingredient. In high-intensity support efforts, however, much more is expected of them. But if they are to operate as anything more than buddies or cheerleaders, they must be chosen carefully, receive appropriate training, and be given adequate time away from their own classroom responsibilities — all of which requires a greater commitment on the part of the school or district.

*Selecting and training effective support providers.* Minimally, support providers should be teachers who are successful in their own classrooms and articulate about their practice. But these are only minimum requirements. Because working with beginning teachers is different from working with children and youth, even the most outstanding K-12 teacher is not automatically suited by skill or temperament to collegial work with other adults. Regarding temperament, for example, some extremely

competent teachers seem to forget how long it took *them* to develop into such effective practitioners. They find it difficult to appropriately downshift their expectations when working with beginning teachers who, with rare exception, cannot possibly teach as well as highly skilled 20-year veterans. Some experienced teachers, accustomed to having their students do what they ask, also find it frustrating to work with adults, who may or may not follow the guidance they offer.

However, if they are temperamentally suited to mentoring, many potential support providers can profit from training in observation skills and specific strategies for working with adults. In cognitive coaching, for example, teachers learn to initiate collegial conversations rather than combative exchanges and to support colleagues in constructing and extending their own analysis of a teaching or learning event. Support providers also benefit from training in how to collect and analyze the different types of evidence that provide insight into the degree of learning taking place in a classroom and, therefore, the effectiveness of the teaching.



Support providers must also recognize the importance of helping beginners identify and understand their teaching strengths. Beginners — and especially the more perceptive beginners — often become fixated on the areas in which they need to improve, losing sight of those things that are working well in their classrooms. Recognizing and understanding their successes not only provides an enormous boost in confidence, but helps beginning teachers build on those strengths.

*Providing release time.* Release time can be used in a number of ways to support beginning teachers. For starters, the beginning teachers themselves can be released to attend seminars, to work with support providers to analyze their students' work and the instruction it reflects, or to observe other teachers for a specific purpose. Support providers can also be released from their own teaching duties to provide

demonstration lessons in beginners' classrooms, which allows novices to see how certain techniques might be used with their own students. Veteran teachers might also use their release time to simply observe beginning teachers in action and document issues for later discussion. All of these professional development activities and more are used in New Zealand, where the national government provides funding that requires schools to provide 0.2 release time for every new teacher along with a locally developed program to develop their abilities (Britton, Paine, & Raizen, 1999).

Schools with a number of beginning-veteran teacher pairs sometimes use a "roving sub" who moves from classroom to classroom, releasing classroom teachers for an hour or two of focused work. Another option is for support providers to work half time with beginning teachers and half-time in classrooms they share with another teacher who wants to work only half-time.

Interactive journals shared by veteran and beginner pairs can facilitate communication between them, while reducing the amount of face-to-face time they need. Veterans use the journal to document classroom observations and to raise issues for reflection and later discussion. Beginners can use it to respond in turn or to pose questions, which the veterans can then address in the journal as well. Such journals may be kept in written form in notebooks or orally, using a small tape recorder.

*Mini-courses addressing common challenges.* Many of the issues that frustrate, stymie, or simply scare beginning teachers are predictable. Some, such as planning for back-to-school night or parent conferences, are relatively easy to address in a quick workshop. Others, such as student discipline, teaching English language learners, and assessment, are thornier and worthy of more attention.

Schools and districts can offer mini-courses or seminars during release time, after school, in the evening, or on weekends, and on their own or in

partnership with universities, county offices of education, or a consortium of small districts. One Arizona district holds a five-day “rookie camp” in the week before school starts. When universities are involved, they can package a series of seminars that earn district credit or credit toward a master’s degree. In fact, the same Arizona district that sponsors a rookie camp also has a partnership with the local university, which has developed its master’s program in education based, in part, on the content needed by district teachers.

Mini-courses and seminars are most effective when beginning teachers receive support in applying the knowledge learned.

Opportunities for relevant role play can be built into the course. Participants can also develop action plans for applying their new knowledge, and those plans can then be critiqued by their classmates. If support providers also attend the mini-course or are informed of its contents, they can then provide relevant support as beginners start applying what they have learned.

*Examining the evidence.*

Veteran teachers can help beginners collect evidence of their teaching practice and analyze it to identify both strengths and areas for improvement. This strategy is most effective when the veteran and beginner pairs take a particular focus, either on a classroom problem or perhaps on competencies the beginner is expected to exhibit. Evidence may come from a veteran’s observations of a beginner’s interactions with his or her own students, from joint analysis of student work, or even from an examination of the arrangement of classroom materials and furniture. Universities can often provide training or expertise in collecting and interpreting evidence, such as through observation or portfolio documentation. In some instances, universities collaborate with districts by actually conducting the observations to provide evidence. Often, an examination of evidence results in a

professional development plan for the beginning teacher, with activities targeted to specific areas of growth.

The natural question that comes up when analyzing evidence of teaching competency is, of course, “what competency are we talking about?” Teaching standards adopted by a state or district identify expected competencies, although rarely at a beginning level. As an articulation of what experienced teachers should know and be able to do, such standards alone are not especially helpful for the novice. However, the Interstate New Teacher

Assessment and Support Consortium publishes a model set of standards that are widely used by teacher preparation programs. These standards are intended to serve as a basis for discussion and adaptation by states, but can also be adapted to district needs.

The California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers, now being piloted in that state, goes further, providing rubrics, or performance levels, for each competency. These rubrics can help the beginner and the veteran interpret the evidence they collect regarding the beginner’s own practices. The rubrics also provide solid ideas about what’s

reasonable to expect for the teacher’s next stage of development. In setting goals for the beginning teacher, it’s important that they be challenging, but also attainable. Teacher assessment instruments, such as the California Teaching Portfolio, developed by WestEd, or Pathwise, developed by the Educational Testing Service, also have rubrics built into them. *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, provides competencies, suggested evidence, and criteria that can be used to guide the collection and interpretation of evidence. Helping beginning teachers collect and analyze evidence related to the effectiveness of their teaching has high potential for promoting reflective

An excellent  
classroom  
teacher does not  
necessarily  
translate into  
an excellent  
support provider.

teaching practice and for improving teaching performance. But, as noted before, it's important that veteran teachers receive training in strategies for collecting and interpreting evidence, in talking about evidence with a beginner, and in understanding the teaching competencies and criteria used. This type of support also helps pinpoint the areas in which assistance should be targeted for a struggling beginner. While some argue that dealing with evidence can be too overwhelming for a new teacher, this strategy can succeed if the veteran is sensitive to the individual beginner's capacity for processing information and provides commensurate support for assisting growth in the identified areas.

### Additional Strategies From Abroad

The United States is not alone in its tendency to put new teachers into place without much support. Among 13 countries recognized as having good mathematics and science education, researchers recently found that 9 provide no or negligible support for new teachers (Britton, Paine, & Raizen, 1999). However, in 4 countries concerted policies, programs, and practices are in place to develop beginning teachers. These efforts include all of the above-mentioned strategies, as well as some other approaches that remain largely untried in the United States.

*Networking new teachers.* In some Swiss states, districts arrange for new teachers to organize across schools into reflective practice groups. A group meets twice a month with an experienced teacher who is extensively trained to facilitate members' exploration of the perennial problems of novice teachers. In New Zealand, regional teacher centers convene new teachers for one to two workshops, in which they can exchange views on problems, break through their isolation, and get "safe" advice from experts who are not associated with their districts.

*Group observation and advice.* In Japan, all teachers — including new ones — are asked to

periodically prepare and deliver a best possible lesson to their students while being observed by many colleagues (Padilla, Riley & Bryan, 1999). While this may feel like an especially pressured situation for a new teacher, most novices subsequently find that the advice and critique from the rest of the faculty is tremendously helpful for their growth.

## Institutional Role in Beginning Teacher Support

Certain institutional policies and practices strengthen all beginning teacher support efforts — starting with having an effective method for identifying new teachers and maintaining realistic expectations for these newcomers.



*Early identification of beginning teachers by the personnel office.* Few personnel offices are set up to formally identify new teachers (whether new to the profession, the state, or the district) and provide that information to their principals or to the coordinator of an induction program. Early identification does, however, aid in planning for specific support activities, such as orientation. It also allows support to begin much earlier in the year.

*Realistic expectations for beginners.* It takes time for teachers to learn their craft. Induction programs can accelerate beginning teacher growth, but most newcomers will still need an extended period before they look like strong veteran teachers. Yet most teacher evaluation systems do not distinguish between beginning and veteran teachers. No one wants to see incompetent teachers in classrooms, but in this era of rising expectations, care must be taken that beginning teachers are not continually hired and then let go in the name of raising standards. Sustained investment of support in beginning teachers who are consistently improving their teaching is a wise policy, especially for districts that are at a disadvantage in hiring teachers.

*Cooperative agreements with unions.* While teacher unions and associations are generally supportive of teacher induction practices, they are wary of setting any undesirable precedents. For example, because issues related to compensation for time spent in required activities are important to all teachers, teacher representatives may also want to negotiate clear limits to the amount of uncompensated time contributed by veteran teachers and beginning teachers in the course of a support program. They are also typically interested in how support providers are selected, especially if a stipend is involved. Having union representatives participate in the planning of support programs or discussion of particularly thorny issues ahead of time can help avoid grievances and divisive struggles.

*Coordination of efforts.* Even when adopting low-intensity support strategies, a district or school needs someone who is paying attention to implementation, dealing with obstacles, and ensuring consistency with other district policies. Whether considering beginning teacher orientations, seminars, coursework, or even pairing beginners with veteran teachers, someone with administrative authority must lay the groundwork. Dates and facilities must be scheduled to avoid conflicts with other school and district activities. Veteran teachers who are willing to work with beginners must be identified, recruited, and trained. Both support and training for these mentors must be ongoing. If the support strategies for beginning teachers are planned at a district level, someone needs to ensure that principals are aware of the nature, timing, and purpose of the various activities. Experience suggests that this is unlikely to happen unless the person responsible for doing all this also has a realistic amount of time set aside for it.

*Release time.* Protected time makes it more likely that classroom observations will take place, that veterans and beginners will actually meet and have discussions that are not rushed, and that beginners

will attend seminars at times when fatigue does not interfere with their ability to pay attention. The creative use of substitutes and staff development days can enhance the effectiveness of support activities.

## Inevitable Challenges for Support Programs

Like beginning teachers themselves, teacher induction programs face some predictable challenges. These include identifying and preparing support providers, providing time for support activities, managing the relationship between support and evaluation, and securing resources for struggling teachers.

*Choosing and preparing support providers.* Finding teachers to serve as support providers is a constant challenge, especially if few incentives are available and support is provided by volunteers. Even when stipends are available, the dollars are rarely commensurate with the amount of time required.

One California induction program attempts to generate future support providers by asking beginners to identify teachers other than their support providers who were helpful; these supportive teachers then receive certificates of appreciation along with information about becoming an official support provider. A school or district can also identify potential support providers by soliciting nominations from principals, staff developers, and teachers.

Larger districts may create full-time positions for support providers, although this is expensive unless subsidized by state or federal entitlement funds or by a special grant solicited specifically to fund new-teacher support.

The selection process is further complicated by the fact that, as noted earlier, excellent classroom teachers do not always make the best support

When keeping new teacher support and new teacher evaluation separate, confidentiality is critical.

providers for beginning teachers. In districts and schools with few opportunities for teachers to work collegially, it may be difficult to predict who has the temperament and skills to work with beginners. Another selection challenge is the uneven distribution of effective support providers across schools. Meetings between beginners and support providers are more effective when the paired teachers teach at the same grade level or in the same content area, and the meetings generally occur with greater frequency when the paired teachers are at the same school. However, it's not always possible to match both teacher focus and teacher location.

Preparation of support providers is also an issue. Typically, there is not enough time to provide all the preparation that might be desirable, so induction programs are forced to concentrate on the training believed to be most important. Some programs focus preparation on coaching skills; others focus on collecting and interpreting evidence of teaching. The most extensive preparation does both. The issue is further complicated if the induction program is expected to address a set of teaching standards, as in the California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program. In that case, support providers must become familiar with the teaching standards.

Occasionally, a district finds a way to make a real financial commitment to new-teacher support. Another Arizona district has solved the “find and prepare” problem by maintaining a cadre of carefully trained master teachers, known as Instructional Program Specialists. These are classroom teachers employed on teacher contracts but deployed on “special assignment,” a significant portion of which is to support new teachers through a three-year formal mentoring relationship. These specialists work directly with new teachers in their classrooms, assessing their practice and doing demonstration teaching. Their basic training covers clinical supervision, cognitive coaching, group facilitation strategies, cooperative learning, essential elements of

instruction, classroom management strategies, multiple intelligences, and district curriculum standards, as well as training in various software programs aligned with district curriculum. In addition, they receive ongoing training as the curriculum is revised and new instructional materials are adopted for student use.

*Providing time for support activities.* Every education reform effort struggles with the issue of time. Every support activity is more likely to happen if time is provided during regular working hours or if teachers are paid for attendance. However, this imposes a tremendous logistical and financial burden on teacher induction programs. Programs manage this challenge by reserving time within the



school day or with paid time for the activities deemed most important. Beginning teachers are especially busy, since they typically spend nights and weekends planning lessons. So any after-school support activities further cut into the time left for any personal life. In addition, beginning teachers need time to think about their teaching in order to grow in their craft. Induction programs must make sure that beginners' time is not filled with formal activities that have little relationship to their teaching, that leave little room for their immediate concerns, or that deny them a reasonable personal life.

*Managing the relationship between beginning teacher support and beginning teacher evaluation.* Beginning teacher support programs focus on improving practice. In contrast, evaluation programs focus on comparing a teacher's practice to a standard that must be met if beginners are to keep their jobs. Many believe that in fairness to new teachers, the two efforts must be kept entirely separate. Naturally, this separation precludes the principal, who is the teachers' primary evaluator, from participating closely in support efforts.

A few induction programs have successfully combined the support and evaluation of beginning

teachers. These programs provide high levels of intensive support to beginning teachers in areas that have been clearly identified to them as requiring growth. The most publicized programs — in Rochester, New York; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Poway, California — are sponsored by American Federation of Teachers affiliates.

Most induction programs, however, separate support and evaluation, due either to a belief that evaluation interferes with support or to concerns about losing union support. In keeping support and evaluation separate, confidentiality is a critical issue, requiring explicit understanding about what support providers will or will not share with principals.

In programs that separate support and evaluation, support providers can usually respond to principals' request to target assistance in a particular area, but they do not report on the perceived success of that effort. Some induction programs ask support providers and beginning teachers to keep the principal informed of general areas in which they are working, such as classroom management or lesson planning. However, when it comes to providing specific information about a beginner's practice to anyone conducting an evaluation, the mentor must refuse. And in keeping such information confidential, they must be supported by district administrators.

Whatever a school's rules about confidentiality related to teacher support, if a beginning teacher and support provider are to work together effectively, the new teacher must trust the intentions of the provider. For that reason, the beginning teacher, the support provider, and the principal must all have the same understanding of those rules from the outset.

Another area for concern relates to aligning evaluation criteria — those used by support providers to help beginning teachers improve and those used by school administrators to evaluate beginners for retention. The criteria should be the same for both purposes. Such alignment helps avoid the kind of awkward situations — and potential lawsuits — that can come about when beginning teachers receive contradictory feedback from support providers and evaluators. Both support providers and school administrators evaluating beginners should receive

training aimed at developing shared understandings about the minimum criteria and standards beginners must meet as a condition of continued employment.

*Getting resources to struggling teachers.* While many beginners will perform adequately even with minimal assistance, some will struggle. These teachers require more support than that provided in most low-intensity strategies; in fact, even programs using high intensity strategies will need to determine how to strategically focus support. Ideally, programs can be flexibly designed to allow some resources to be shifted from beginners who are doing fine to those who are not. In some instances, a new teacher may be so needy that a single mentor cannot fully meet his or her needs — especially if the mentor is working with multiple beginners or is working only part time as a mentor and has other responsibilities. In such cases, it may be more effective to have a mentor serve as coordinator of individualized services for the beginner, putting him or her in touch with others who can also help. Thus, in working with very needy newcomers, mentors must understand what additional resources, if any, are available. They must also understand how effective support for this population of beginning teachers differs from that for more competent newcomers.

Equally important, mentors should understand that, despite their best efforts, not all beginning teachers will be successful because, simply put, not everyone is suited to teaching. In these cases, support providers may need strategies for counseling beginning teachers out of the teaching profession.

## Conclusion

School and district administrators can select strategies from those described above to create or strengthen an induction program to support beginning teachers. Whether they provide personal and emotional support, task- or problem-related support, or stimulate beginners to reflect on their teaching, all are valuable. Less intensive support strategies have been found effective at increasing retention and promoting personal and professional

well-being, but the more intensive strategies are more effective at improving beginning teaching practice.

In creating an induction program, however small, thought should also be given as to how to manage the challenges identified in this brief. While the list of issues and support strategies can be laid out in a simple, straightforward way, implementation of the strategies and management of the challenges require close attention to context and available resources. Some support strategies may reopen previously contested institutional policies and

practices, such as compensation for additional work, release time priorities, and lack of professional, collegial conversations.

As with any program, the first year or so of a beginning teacher support effort is likely to be bumpy; success requires a commitment to learn from mistakes and to identify necessary changes in resources, policies, and practices. The potential payoffs — lower teacher attrition, higher teacher morale, and, most importantly, improved teaching and learning — make the effort worthwhile.

*WestEd would like to hear more about schools' and districts' successful efforts, as well as their continuing challenges, in supporting beginning teachers. We would also like to know if and how you have found this brief to be helpful. Please send e-mail to < Lifelines@WestEd.org > , or write Communications at the WestEd address on the back.*

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## RESOURCES

American Federation of Teachers affiliate-sponsored support programs. For information about: the Rochester [New York] Teachers Association (RTA) mentor program for first-year teachers, visit the RTA Web site at < rochesterteachers.com/cit.htm > , or call Carl O'Connell at 716/262-8541; the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers' program, contact Denise Hewitt by e-mail at < hewitt@cpsboe.k-12.oh.us > or call 513/475-6042; the Poway Professional Assistance Program sponsored by the Poway Federation of Teachers, call 858/748-0010, X2324 or e-mail < ppappusd@sdcod.k-12.ca.us > .

*(continued on next page)*

## more resources

Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment. This California program supports individuals in their first and second years of teaching through mentoring and coaching, professional development and training activities, and assessment of professional growth. For information, contact Terry Janicki with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing at 916/322-2305 or < tjanicki@ctc.ca.gov> or Suzanne Riley with the California Department of Education at 916/657-3393 or < sriley@cde.ca.gov> ; or visit the BTSA Web site due on line in Spring 2000 < www.btsa.ca.gov> .

*Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching.* Danielson, C. (1996). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. A framework of components of teaching practice, together with suggested data sources and descriptive scales to guide either self-reflection or support.

*Mentoring: A resource and training guide for educators.* Newton, A. et al. (1994). Stoneham, MA: WestEd. A guide and an extensive set of activities for preparing mentors to support beginning teachers, with sample two-, three-, and five-day workshops.

*Mentor teacher programs in the States.* (1998). Educational issues Policy Brief #5. Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers.

*Model standards for beginning teacher licensing and development: A resource for state dialogue.* Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (1992). Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers. A copy can be obtained by calling Jean Miller at 202/336-7048.

The New Teacher Center at University of California, Santa Cruz, offers support and assistance to school districts, universities, and other educational entities in development of teacher induction programs. For more information, call 831/459-4323 or e-mail < ntc@zzyx.ucsc.edu> .

The Pathwise Induction program, available from Educational Testing Service (ETS), is a support and formative assessment process designed to assist beginning teachers' growth as reflective practitioners. For information, contact ETS at 800/297-9051.

This report was produced in whole or in part with funds from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract #RJ96006901. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Education.

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# Promoting Self-Efficacy in Early Career Teachers: A Principal's Guide for Differentiated Mentoring and Supervision

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*Florida Journal of Educational  
Administration & Policy*

Winter 2010  
Volume 4, Issue 1

*The challenges in meeting the demand for highly qualified teachers are great. This is evident both at the individual school level and in national retention and turnover statistics. The need for individually targeted teacher induction activities based on teacher preparation routes -traditional and alternative certification - are needed to help ameliorate the early career teacher turnover and retention statistics. This study reinterprets data from a previous study of teacher confidence and self-efficacy in terms of mentoring and supervision needs (induction activities). The results suggest that mentoring and supervision activities at the school level can be implemented to improve retention in perception of key competency areas. As frontline supervisors, principals are in a unique position to meet the differential needs of early career teachers.*

Key Words: Teacher development, retention, mentoring, supervision, self-efficacy, early career

Shortages at some schools are not entirely a result of teachers leaving the profession, but are also related to the characteristics of those particular schools. Nationally, approximately 30% of new teachers leave within the first three years; nearly 50% leave within five years (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Darling-Hammond (2002) concluded that alternative certification programs tend to produce poor quality teachers and that these teachers were most likely to leave the profession within their first three years. Further, the author found that traditionally prepared teachers were four to five times more likely to remain in their positions. Darling-Hammond, Chung and Frelow (2002) also noted that traditionally prepared teachers felt significantly better prepared than did those prepared through alternative programs or those without preparation. Principals and other building level administrators (i.e. assistant principals or deans) are in a position to address the need for additional supervision and professional development (induction) activities that encourage, support, and retain early career teachers in the first three to five years of service. This study will address those issues and provides suggested activities for retention of early career teachers.

### **Background**

In an analysis of the teacher shortage and teacher turnover, Ingersoll (2001) suggested that efforts to curtail the shortage should focus not only on increasing the supply of teachers through recruitment, but also on retaining teachers currently in the system. When examining characteristics of teachers who leave and stay in the field of teaching, Luekens, Lyter, and Chandler (2004) found that the highest percentages of teachers who leave do so within the first three years of teaching. In an effort to retain teachers and promote student achievement, many states have adapted national generic teaching practices, such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards, to represent teacher proficiency. In Florida, state teaching standards are called Educator Accomplished Practices (EAP's). EAP's are based on a continuous quality improvement model that begins with preservice teacher preparation and continues through the educator's professional career, with the intention of promoting student achievement. Districts often design their evaluation tools, new teacher induction programs and professional development plans based on the EAP's. Similar practices are followed nationally.

Howe (2006) conducted an analysis of the most outstanding teacher induction programs in the United States, Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and New Zealand. He notes that while induction programs and practice did differ by country, exemplary programs emphasized skillful and specially trained mentors, comprehensive inservice training, extended internship programs, reduced teaching assignments and include "opportunities for experts and neophytes to learn together in a supportive environment promoting time for collaboration, reflection, and gradual acculturation into the profession of teaching" (p. 295). Howe further suggests that a key element in successful teacher induction is the provision of time for reflection and opportunities for continued professional development. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) studied the effects of induction activities on teacher turnover in a national sample of first year teachers and found that while many common individual induction activities did not seem to have a statistically significant impact on turnover, receiving an increased number of induction activities or supports was associated with a decrease in rate of turnover. Moreover, the authors note that having a mentor in one's own field, time to collaborate with other teachers, and membership in an outside

network of teachers were found to be most effective of the activities studied. They conclude, “teachers participating in combinations or packages of mentoring and group induction activities were less likely to migrate to other schools or to leave teaching at the end of their first year” (p. 706).

A number of studies that specifically focuses on teacher induction have identified that many early career teachers, regardless of route to certification, report an absence of effective induction and mentoring programs or complete absence of any induction or mentoring program (Chesley, Wood, & Zepeda, 1997; Johnson & Kardos, 2002; Salyer, 2003). This is incongruent with conventional wisdom which suggests that support and mentoring are critical aspects of the early career teacher experience. Typical induction programs are district-wide and relieve principals of immediate responsibility. However, Darling-Hammond’s (2002) study indicates that many first year teachers do not actually receive these generic supports. The lack of quality supports are exacerbated by the number of teachers fast-tracked into the classroom. Finally, a number of reports, including the 1996 report of the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future*, have pointed to the close relationship between student achievement and teachers’ skills, knowledge, and practices. Thus, what teachers know and can do is crucial to what students learn.

Research examining factors related to successful teacher preparation programs has demonstrated that programs focusing on classroom work during the first year, oversight of student teaching, studying curricula, and opportunities to engage in the actual activities of teaching (i.e. assessing a student’s ability and planning a guided lesson) produce teachers whose students show greater gains than teachers from preparation programs lacking in such features (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2009). An additional area warranting consideration in successful teacher preparation programs is pedagogy (teaching student teachers how to teach). Hamman, Olivarez, Lesley, Button, Chan, Griffith, and Elliot (2006) studied the interaction between cooperating and student teachers in relation to student teacher self-efficacy. These authors found that amount of guidance received from a cooperating teacher was related to the level of student teachers’ self-efficacy, with elementary student teachers reportedly receiving a significantly higher level of guidance. They additionally observed that student teachers who received more guidance also spent more time imitating their cooperative teachers, although this behavior was found to be less beneficial than actual instructional guidance. Kerns (1996) surveyed graduates of a specific teacher preparation program and found that while graduates felt prepared to teach overall, they identified several areas of perceived weakness including consultation, organization and supervision of aides, affecting change, and knowledge of outside services and resources. Kerns notes that the program has responded to the study’s results by adding consultation to required coursework, bringing effective teams of teachers and aides into seminars, requiring students to join a professional organization, encouraging submission of journal articles and/or presentations, and the addition of a class project in which the student develops a personal resource bank. The necessity for such changes within teacher preparation programs are a result of the evolving expectations placed on today’s teachers and the changes within the student body itself.

Given the technological prowess of today’s students, several authors suggest the use of technology for a variety of purposes to enhance teacher preparation programs. Golas (2010) notes the importance of including technology in teacher preparation programs with the ultimate goal of preparing today’s students to enter a workforce that is highly dependent on technology. The

author further asserts that preparation programs in which technology is emphasized are more likely to produce teachers with a high level of self-efficacy for the utilization of technology. Israel, Knowlton, Griswold and Rowland (2009) assert that video-conferencing technology can be a highly useful and powerful instructional tool within teacher preparation programs which facilitates observation of live classroom events within a lecture-style course as well as provision of remote coaching, supervision, and evaluation to preservice teachers. However, the power of technology and other teaching tools that can be employed to create effective new teachers in traditional teacher preparation programs may be lost when considering the various alternative and sometimes accelerated paths to teacher certification. Often early career teachers must try to catch up while already running as fast as they can from behind as their supervisors already possess the skills of teacher, trainer, coach, assessor, and evaluator.

### **Alternative Certification Programs**

Alternative certification programs differ significantly from more traditional methods of teacher training. A common theme among alternative models is that they offer a fast-track preparation program leading to expeditious entry into the classroom (Hawley, 1990). Although these programs produce new teachers quickly, many lack appropriate supervision and mentoring which may be necessary to compensate for the lack of prior classroom experience that the more traditional teacher training programs afford. In fact, many of the fast-track programs expect the teacher to learn as they teach. Yarger and Kasten (2001) noted that guided pedagogical development and supervised clinical practice have often been eliminated, removing new teachers from the intellectual underpinnings of professional teaching. It is possible that the lack of classroom experience and supervised practice available to students in alternative certification programs is a contributing factor in the high rate of early career teachers who leave the profession.

In an analysis of the reasons why teachers in Florida leave the profession, Feng (2005) suggested that attrition occurred most frequently in early career teachers. It was also found that teacher's attrition was related to the achievement and behavior of their own students. Since student behavior and achievement may be directly related to the teacher's experience and degree of efficacy in classroom management and instructional strategies, this is a significant finding in that it coincides with previous findings that links directly to efficacy (Isaacs et al., 2007). Early career teachers who do not have a sense of self-efficacy for teaching, due to lack of prior experience, preparation, or other factors, may be more likely to leave the profession within the first few years.

Although alternative certification programs are not new to teacher education, they are unique as professional teacher preparation programs. The proliferation of these programs began in the 1980's and has been accelerating at a rapid pace (Legler, 2002; *Alternative teacher certification: A state-by-state analysis*, 2006). Alternative programs are based on the assumption that if one possesses content knowledge in an area, that individual can quickly become an expert teacher in the classroom. The underlying message is that knowledge of content is the most critical factor in becoming a teacher. Many assumptions have been made about alternative teacher education programs. However, when tested in the limited body of empirical research the results are mixed (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2006; Legler, 2002). Assumptions about alternatively

certified teachers include a tendency to be content specific teachers (core knowledge in the content area), lack of preparation to work with diverse populations, lack of preparation for the nuances of the teaching profession, and lack of training in methods that are critical to successful student outcomes. Despite research on various models of alternative certification, researchers understand little about teachers' beliefs regarding their own competence as teachers. However, it is this sense of efficacy or perceived competency in teaching, derived in part from successful classroom experiences, that ultimately brings content expertise to students. More research is needed to determine the role of self-efficacy in the attrition rates of alternatively certified teachers.

Principals are the individuals who are most challenged by the day-to-day realities of teacher turnover. The principal and/or other building level administrators are typically responsible for the hiring, evaluation, continuing professional development, and integration of teachers into the life of the school. Early career teachers, whose relative lack of experience can make them highly vulnerable, may require special attention during the evaluation, professional development, and school integration processes. Although there is a notion that alternatively certified teachers have less classroom experiences and thus may be more vulnerable, the increasing need for teachers has often led to more broad based hypotheses regarding the kind of preparation that renders a teacher highly qualified. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) defines highly qualified teachers as having a bachelor's degree, state teaching certification or licensure, and possessing the ability to demonstrate subject competency. In the State of Florida, teachers are required to demonstrate subject competency by passing a test. Thus, NCLB attempts to address the issues of teacher shortages and the need for better retention rates of qualified teachers by broadening the definition of "highly qualified". However, teachers who are highly qualified often develop professional skills and abilities throughout the course of their careers. The development of such skills, which are crucial to successful student outcomes, must be continually honed after formal teacher education has been completed.

Once teachers complete their formal preparation, building administrators are responsible for fostering growth and successful integration into the staff and profession. This idea of continued support, supervision, and professional development beyond formal training and certification is what ultimately results in teacher quality. Another critically important element related to quality may be the perceived confidence and competence (self-efficacy) of early career teachers. Due to the lack of classroom experiences that some alternative certification programs provide, these teachers may have less self-efficacy for teaching. This deficit in classroom confidence may be linked to lower quality teaching practices. However, methods aimed at increasing early career teacher self-efficacy, regardless of certification program, have the potential to assist schools in promoting high quality teachers who are invested in the profession.

### **The Intersection of Self-Efficacy and Teacher Induction**

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) posits that individuals possess a self-evaluation system that allows them to exercise some control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions. These self-evaluations help determine how much effort individuals will expend on any activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles, and how resilient they will be in adverse situations. According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy beliefs may be strong predictors of related

performance. In other words, the confidence people bring to specific tasks plays an important role in their success or failure to complete those tasks. One trend in teacher preparation that may assist increasing self-efficacy beliefs among students is the learner-centered personal learning plan (PLP). Malone (2008) evaluated the use of PLP's with undergraduate early childhood education majors and found that a majority of students believed that the PLP helped them better understand their own educational needs, allowed them to learn more independently and better understand course content, and increased their critical thinking skills. Malone notes that students reported a high level of comfort with the PLP method and this, combined with the perceived value of the method lends support to the notion that PLP's may be a valuable tool for helping students feel comfortable and capable in the classroom thus allowing them to devote more attention to learning. McDonnough and Matkins (2010) found that elementary preservice teachers often have difficulty with science content. However, they observed that self-efficacy beliefs were increased when a field experience was embedded in a science methods course as compared with a group of students who did not complete a field experience as part of their science methods instruction. These authors suggest that increased efficacy beliefs may be due to the increased opportunities to practice specific techniques, receive feedback from supervisors, and the development of a sense of accomplishment via having real world performance experience.

As one projects these self-efficacy beliefs into the first three years of teaching, there is a natural intersection with teacher induction research. The concepts of teacher induction activities and individual teacher self-efficacy are critical at the individual school level, especially in schools that need highly qualified teachers the most. These schools typically have bigger classrooms, lower achievement levels, fewer resources, and more diverse student populations. However, new teachers are most often assigned to the lowest achieving schools, which have the greatest need for highly qualified and experienced teachers. Principals and other school administrators can attempt to balance the lack of classroom experience and time in the teaching profession via supervision and professional development activities targeted at individual teacher needs during the induction phase, the first three years.

Understanding the connection between self-efficacy beliefs and teacher retention might provide information to enhance retention rates or retain qualified teachers in the schools that need them the most. Further research exploring the effects of mentoring and frequent targeted feedback as they relate to improved performance and increased self-efficacy for teaching has the potential to assist principals in developing building level induction, mentoring, and supervision programs that work to retain teachers. The principal is in a unique position to provide a strong link between self-efficacy beliefs and the skills they are based upon because they have had diverse experiences within the teaching profession. Wood (2005) highlights the importance of principals in teacher induction and notes that they may play several integral roles including culture builder, instructional leader, coordinator/facilitator of mentors, recruiter, and novice teacher advocate/retainer. Jacob and Lefgren (2008) suggested that principals evaluate individual teachers based on informal observations, parental input, and student achievement scores. Principals often use their wisdom and professional experience to provide development activities that directly relate to the needs of each individual teacher. Conversely, teachers may have a false sense of self-efficacy through lack of sufficient and appropriate feedback and support at the school and classroom level. Thus, the principal plays a vital role in the growth and professional development of early career teachers.

## Methodology

Isaacs and colleagues (2007) conducted a mixed method – qualitative/quantitative study that examined the experience, attitudes, and projected career plans of early career teachers who had less than three years total experience as teachers from three Southwest Florida school districts. The data from that study were reexamined to provide a guide for principals outlining the mentoring and supervision activities that can be implemented at the building level to retain early career teachers.

A total of 194 responses were received from the 1800 invitations issued to teachers within the first three years of teaching in three school districts in Southwest Florida. The participants provided their responses to a survey with open-ended questions concerning 12 key competencies known as the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAP), similar to competency standards in most other states, as well as national standards. They also provided information about how they were hired and their short-term intentions within education. Of the respondents, 114 were fully certified with 5 year professional certificates, one was a licensed therapist, and 79 were certified through one of several alternative routes.

The sample was divided based on self-report of whether the teacher was working under a state issued professional certificate (traditional route to certification) or one of state or district issued temporary or alternative certifications. The majority of respondents (177) indicated they were White. Most teachers had obtained their jobs by applying directly to the district or through a particular school. A few (11) obtained their jobs at statewide career fairs or via out of state recruiting activities. No differences in obtaining their position, based on certification route, appeared to exist. Many respondents identified substitute teaching or interning at a school as a frequent method of “getting known” for the purpose of influencing the hiring process.

The results of the earlier study (2007) were analyzed to determine if there were any difference in confidence related to the identified competencies between teachers who had completed traditional university teacher preparation and certification as one group and those who had achieved certification through one of several available “alternative” routes (using Levene’s F-test and Two tailed *t*-tests). Qualitative responses were coded and categorized into three areas – traditional or nontraditional certification, area of specialty, and elementary, middle or high school grade level. Only the quantitative responses are used for this paper.

## Results

Significant differences ( $p < .01$ ) appeared for several of the EAP competencies in lesson planning and long-term lesson planning, teaching to a variety of learning styles, teaching students with learning disabilities, teaching students who speak English as a second language, maintaining a safe learning environment, promoting and developing literacy, and developing classroom assessments. As well, degrees of confidence were identified by assessing the percentage of respondents overall who felt prepared or very prepared in each group in a stated task area.

When queried about future career and employment intentions, a large majority (90%) of those surveyed thought it was likely or very likely that they would remain in teaching and in their district. However, fewer of the respondents (76%) thought they would remain in their current school. Almost two-thirds (62%) of the respondents indicated that they would add another

teaching specialty to their certification, with a larger percentage of those who had been alternatively certified seeking to add a specialty than those traditionally certified.

Table 1

*Comparison of Teaching Competencies by Certification*

Competency:	Very Prepared	Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Unprepared
<b>Lesson Planning (overall)</b>	71 (37%)	70 (36%)	40 (21%)	12 (6%)
Traditional	53 (47%)	43 (38%)	13 (11%)	5 (4%)
Alternative	18 (23%)	27 (34%)	27 (34%)	7 (9%)
<b>Long-term Lesson Planning</b>	47 (24%)	75 (39%)	46 (24%)	25 (13%)
Traditional	35 (31%)	49 (43%)	24 (21%)	6 (5%)
Alternative	12 (15%)	26 (33%)	22 (28%)	19 (24%)
<b>Behavior Management</b>	40 (21%)	73 (38%)	48 (25%)	22 (11%)
Traditional	28 (25%)	41 (36%)	36 (32%)	9 (8%)
Alternative	12 (15%)	32 (41%)	22 (28%)	13 (16%)
<b>Organize Learning</b>	49 (25%)	83 (43%)	51 (26%)	10 (5%)
Traditional	36 (32%)	45 (40%)	29 (25%)	4 (4%)
Alternative	13 (16%)	38 (48%)	22 (28%)	6 (8%)
<b>Teach to a Variety of Learning Styles</b>	57 (30%)	64 (33%)	56 (29%)	16 (8%)
Traditional	41 (36%)	41 (33%)	27 (24%)	5 (4%)
Alternative	16 (20%)	23 (29%)	29 (37%)	11 (14%)
<b>Teach Learning Disabled Students</b>	28 (15%)	53 (27%)	72 (37%)	40 (21%)
Traditional	21 (18%)	35 (31%)	40 (35%)	18 (16%)
Alternative	7 (9%)	18 (23%)	32 (41%)	22 (28%)
<b>Teach Students who are ESOL</b>	22 (11%)	41 (21%)	53 (27%)	67 (35%)
Traditional	17 (15%)	27 (24%)	38 (33%)	32 (28%)
Alternative	5 (6%)	14 (18%)	26 (33%)	34 (43%)
<b>Maintain a Safe Learning Environment</b>	75 (39%)	86 (44%)	26 (21%)	6 (7%)
Traditional	51 (45%)	50 (44%)	10 (9%)	3 (2%)
Alternative	24 (30%)	36 (46%)	16 (20%)	3 (4%)
<b>Promote and Develop Literacy</b>	61 (32%)	70 (36%)	45 (23%)	17 (9%)

Competency:	Very Prepared	Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Unprepared
Traditional	47 (41%)	39 (34%)	24 (21%)	4 (4%)
Alternative	14 (18%)	31 (39%)	21 (27%)	13 (16%)
<b>Manage Time</b>	48 (25%)	77 (40%)	47 (24%)	21 (11%)
Traditional	31 (27%)	49 (43%)	25 (22%)	9 (8%)
Alternative	17 (22%)	28 (35%)	22 (28%)	12 (15%)
<b>Use Technology to Enhance Teaching</b>	40 (21%)	67 (35%)	60 (31%)	26 (13%)
Traditional	22 (19%)	38 (33%)	34 (30%)	20 (18%)
Alternative	18 (23%)	29 (37%)	26 (33%)	6 (8%)
<b>Incorporate Critical Thinking</b>	45 (23%)	96 (50%)	45 (23%)	7 (4%)
Traditional	30 (26%)	60 (52%)	22 (19%)	2 (2%)
Alternative		37 (47%)	22 (28%)	5 (6%)
<b>Develop Classroom Assessments</b>	15 (20%)	89 (46%)	51 (26%)	10 (5%)
Traditional	43 (22%)	51 (45%)	26 (23%)	3 (3%)
Alternative	34 (30%)	38 (48%)	25 (32%)	7 (9%)
<b>Communicate Effectively with all Stakeholders</b>	71 (37%)	86 (45%)	30 (16%)	6 (3%)
Traditional	45 (40%)	54 (47%)	13 (11%)	2 (2%)
Alternative	26 (33%)	32 (41%)	17 (22%)	4 (5%)
<b>Maintain Standards for Ethical and Professional Behavior</b>	114 (59%)	66 (34%)	11 (6%)	1 (1%)
Traditional	69 (61%)	39 (34%)	6 (5%)	0 (0%)
Alternative	45 (58%)	27 (35%)	5 (6%)	1 (1%)
<b>Match Classroom Curriculum to Standards (FCAT)</b>	28 (27%)	42 (40%)	20 (19%)	15 (14%)
Traditional	22 (33%)	26 (39%)	10 (15%)	8 (12%)
Alternative	6 (15%)	16 (41%)	10 (26%)	7 (18%)
<b>Administer FCAT</b>	34 (30%)	41 (37%)	18 (16%)	19 (17%)
Traditional	23 (34%)	21 (31%)	10 (15%)	13 (19%)
Alternative	11 (24%)	20 (44%)	8 (18%)	6 (13%)
<b>Use FCAT Results to Modify Teaching</b>	20 (19%)	38 (36%)	22 (21%)	27 (25%)
Traditional	15 (23%)	23 (36%)	11 (17%)	15 (23%)
Alternative	5 (12%)	15 (35%)	11 (26%)	12 (28%)

Table 1 presents results concerning degree of confidence overall and by certification route for each of the twelve FEAP teaching practices as well as identified competencies related to the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Most respondents with traditional certification felt very prepared or prepared in every area. However, less than half of the alternatively certified teachers felt prepared overall in the majority of the categories. For a full explanation of the original study methodology and data, see Isaacs, Elliott, McConney, Wachholz, Greene, and Green, (2007).

### Discussion

While the size of the sample restricted the generalizability of the findings, this sample along with high level of attrition typically found among early career teachers may be reflective of early career teachers in Southwest Florida. The responding sample may not represent what some research suggests, which is that the population of early career teachers that has a high proportion of teachers who leave the profession within the first five years. Nonetheless, research examining the connection between self-efficacy beliefs and teacher retention provides information about the kinds of supports needed to positively influence the rates of teacher retention and increase quality teaching practices. This, coupled with the respondents' projections about leaving current schools while remaining in the district, makes this data especially important to principals and other building level administrators. The results of this study suggest several areas that may require increased attention by principals for continuing training/mentoring. Five specific areas warranting further consideration and research include:

- Teaching ESOL students (only one-third feeling prepared or very prepared)
- Teaching students who are learning disabled (less than one-half feeling prepared or very prepared)
- Modifying teaching based on FCAT (standardized testing) results (just over half feeling prepared or very prepared)
- Using technology to enhance teaching (just over half feeling prepared or very prepared)
- Behavior management (just under two-thirds feeling prepared or very prepared)

Schools with the highest turnover rates and greatest needs for highly qualified teachers are often characterized by students with needs which require skill in competence areas that early career teachers feel least able to perform (i.e. behavior management, working with students who are learning disabled, and using standardized testing results to modify teaching). Thus, the promotion of more individualized and targeted induction, mentoring and supervision at the school level may have benefits in continuity, competence, and investment in those schools that require confident and competent teachers the most. Such individualized activities have the potential to make the most of the resources and strengths of teachers with differing preparation routes to the classroom.

In this study the teachers trained through a traditional route who participated were more positive about feeling prepared or very prepared than their alternatively trained counterparts. On many of these items the difference was statistically significant (i.e. lesson planning, long term lesson planning, organizing learning activities, teaching to a variety of learning styles, teaching students who are learning disabled, teaching English language learners, maintaining a safe learning environment, promoting and developing literacy, incorporating critical thinking,

developing classroom assessments, communicating effectively with all stakeholders and matching classroom curriculum to state standards). This study provides preliminary results which suggest that alternatively certified teachers may require differential and perhaps more individually targeted continuing training and/or mentoring. Although more research is needed to determine possible nationwide trends in self-efficacy for teaching among early career teachers, we hypothesize that principals who make efforts to identify problematic areas and provide support are more likely to:

1. Assist early career teachers in improving self-efficacy for teaching, which can lead to an increase in teacher quality.
2. Increase retention rates among early career teachers.
3. Promote a supportive and instructive environment in which early career teachers can continue to develop professionally.

### Strategies to Meet the Needs of Early Career Teachers

Social learning theory provides an amenable framework to identify new strategies that accomplish training and mentoring in ways that complement individual early career teacher needs. Formal training programs, whether traditionally or alternatively modeled, must provide young teachers with some of the foundational elements critical to educators (i.e. management of student behavior, knowledge of subject matter, and assessment of student learning). However, the development and progression of early career teachers into truly skilled professionals requires continued support and supervision. One such national model for new teachers is the nationally recognized *New Teacher Center (NTC)*, [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org). The NTC asserts mentor-based support programs foster retention and transform learning communities. One element that may be lacking within the current system is the attention to young teachers' perceived competence (self-efficacy beliefs) for teaching. According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy beliefs are strongly linked to successful outcomes for a given task. Principals and other building level administrators should consider several factors when devising methods to support early career teachers including but not limited to individual teachers' needs, method of training, and self-efficacy for standard competencies (state and school identified) in teaching. Finally, we suggest the consideration of some new strategies focused on improving self-efficacy, quality of teaching, and retention rates for early career teachers:

- **Do not make the first year of teaching a game of “education survivor”.** Early career teachers need support and supervision. Those who do not feel improvement in confidence levels throughout their experiences may be more likely to leave the profession.
- **Set a good example by providing individualized attention.** The expectation for teachers with classes of 20-30 students is that they are to know each child, understand their learning style and needs, and provide individualized instruction to maximize each child's learning. Principals and building administrators should do the same with new teachers.
- **Assess early career teacher self-efficacy and learning needs.** This is especially important with regard to key competence areas. Individual needs can be assessed as they relate to established competencies (e.g. teaching ESOL students, students who have learning disabilities, and using standardized test results to modify instruction and behavior

management). Assessment should be conducted with a combination of self-report and observation methods. Alternatively certified teachers may have more or different areas of concern, although their content expertise may be very strong.

- **Have “quick strategies” available.** The provision of specific plans or methods to address teacher concerns in key areas can quickly address issues, limiting the amount of time during which the teacher experiences low levels of confidence. This sends the message that such concerns may be normal for early career teachers and breaks problems down into smaller, more manageable pieces (which can increase confidence/self-efficacy). Methods available to quickly address specific concerns may include DVD/video, written step-by-step processes, and/or research.
- **Match mentor’s strengths with new teachers needs.** Deliberately match early career teachers with mentors who are skilled in addressing the specific individual’s area of need. Avoid assigning mentors based solely on number of years in the field and/or willingness to serve.
- **Conduct targeted observation and provide timely feedback.** Observe for targeted skills only and provide quick feedback; schedule additional observation to ensure progress. Break down necessary priorities, knowledge, and/or skills into manageable pieces and/or realistic timelines to promote effective and efficient problem solving.
- **Develop building level mentoring programs and/or join with a partner school to provide mentor exchanges.** Develop an on-site mentoring program (including creative use of technology) that closely monitors new teachers via on-site mentors or create a partnership with another school to introduce more targeted strengths where needed.
- **Get other teachers in the building invested in the success of new teachers.** Develop a set of incentives such as professional development, travel, and/or training opportunities for those who work with new teachers. Additional possibilities may include provision of materials or an extra sub day with the monies not spent on recruiting and hiring, setting targets for retaining teachers, involving existing teachers in the hiring process, or partnering with another local school to use technology or other formats where teacher strengths for training and mentoring can be exchanged.
- **Adapt a quick questionnaire to target specific competencies.** Principals can develop and use a questionnaire or checklist developed from the state or district’s identified key teacher competencies. Such a questionnaire may be used as a preliminary guide for early career teacher professional development and observation activities.
- **Track effective practices within districts.** Encourage districts or schools that have maintained higher retention rates to share their best induction and mentoring practices, especially those used with alternatively certified teachers.

Finally, while the suggestions previously listed may provide some initial strategies and can be utilized to promote early career teacher self-efficacy, quality of teaching, and retention, further action is need to identify differentiated practices that benefit new teachers based on preparation route to the classroom. Researchers and principals should collaborate to engage district personnel with an action plan that identifies national models, such as the *New Teacher Center*, to develop more effective strategies for school level support for both traditionally and alternatively certified early career teachers.

### Conclusion

This paper makes specific recommendations to principals and building administrators to develop and retain highly qualified teachers who are early in their careers, based upon the concept of self-efficacy and data showing lack of perceived competency in key teaching components. Promotion of early career teacher self-efficacy is critical to student success, especially in schools that have the greatest need for qualified, competent, and confident educators. Additionally, it focuses on the differential needs for training and mentoring that alternatively certified early career teachers bring to their first assignments. Those teachers who projected remaining in the profession (from this sample) indicated that it is likely that they will leave their initial school assignment and/or district. This likelihood for change will exacerbate the search for highly qualified teachers at the individual school level, especially in schools with critical needs. When coupled with the number of teachers indicating change of assignment and 30% of new teachers leaving the profession entirely within five years, principals can view the focus on supervision, mentoring, and induction as vehicles for saving them the time of constant recruiting and hiring. Thus, principals and other building level administrators are provided with action steps that can be implemented to provide greater stability in the building's teaching staff, with the advantage that teachers who remain will have been nurtured and feel a greater investment in the school as well as the teaching profession.

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# **Orientation and Induction of the Beginning Teacher**

**Fred C. Lunenburg**  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Despite efforts to help beginning teachers succeed, many still experience problems, ranging from feelings of isolation to lack of support from experienced teachers and supervisors. The result is that nearly 50% of potentially talented and creative teachers leave the profession within five years. Ways to help beginning teachers succeed include providing professional development geared specifically toward the needs of beginning teachers; peer coaching or mentoring; easing up on the assignment of extra-class duties during the first year of service; and engaging beginning teachers in a reflective practice approach.

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What are the general needs of the beginning teacher? Most schools plan for teacher orientation, but in spite of efforts to help teachers succeed, many still encounter adjustment problems. A review of the research on problems of beginning teachers shows that feelings of isolation; poor understanding of what is expected of them; workload and extra assignments that they were unprepared to handle; lack of supplies, materials, or equipment; poor physical facilities; and lack of support or help from experienced teachers or supervisors contribute to their feelings of frustration and failure (Rubinstein, 2010; Veenman, 1984). The result is that many potentially talented and creative teachers find teaching unrewarding and difficult, especially in inner-city schools; and nearly 50% of newly hired teachers leave the profession within five years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010).

## **The Induction Period**

There is recognition that the induction period, the first two or three years of teaching, is critical in developing teachers' capabilities, and that beginning teachers should not be left alone to sink or swim (Clement, 2011). Several state education agencies, including California, Kentucky, and Wisconsin, have recently developed internship programs for new teachers (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012), while other states have increased staff development activities (Bishop, 2011; Lieberman, 2012). However,

most important for the professional development of new teachers are the internal support systems and strategies that the schools adopt (that is, the daily support activities and continual learning opportunities) (Breau, 2011).

In general, having to learn by trial and error without support and supervision has been the most common problem faced by new teachers (Marzano, 2011). Expecting teachers to function without support is based on the false assumptions that (a) teachers are well prepared for their initial classroom and school experiences, (b) teachers can develop professional expertise on their own, and (c) teaching can be mastered in a relatively short period of time. Researchers find that there is little attempt to lighten the class load and limit extra-class assignments to make the beginning teacher's job easier. In the few schools that do limit these activities, teachers have reported that they have had the opportunity to "learn to teach" (Cohen, 2010).

Unquestionably, new teachers need the feedback and encouragement experienced teachers can provide. Peer coaching or mentoring is gaining support as an effective supervision tool (Lieberman, 2011; McDermott, 2011). *Peer coaching or mentoring* takes place when classroom teachers observe one another, provide feedback concerning their teaching, and together develop instructional plans (Burley, 2011). According to Joyce and Calhoun (2010), an experienced teacher who acts as a peer coach or mentor teacher for an inexperienced teacher performs five functions: (a) *companionship*, discussing ideas, problems, and successes; (b) *technical feedback*, especially related to lesson planning and classroom observations; (c) *analysis of application*, integrating what happens or what works as part of the beginning teacher's repertoire; (d) *adaptation*, helping the beginning teacher adapt to particular situations; and (e) *personal facilitation*, helping the teacher feel good about self after trying new strategies. Others suggest that the main features of a successful mentoring program include (a) proximity, (b) grade equivalence (at the elementary level), (c) subject equivalence (at the secondary level), and (d) compatibility (in terms of personality, experiences, and educational philosophy) (Barkley, 2010; Wright, 2010).

### **Reflective Practice**

Perhaps the most important ingredient for a peer coach, mentor, or resource teacher is to allow new teachers to *reflect*, not react or defend (Ghaye, 2011; Richards, 2011). An integral part of any good program for helping novice teachers is for them to observe experienced teachers on a regular basis, then for experienced teachers to observe novice teachers. With both observational formats, there is need to discuss what facilitated or hindered the teaching-learning process and precisely what steps or recommendations are needed for improving instruction (Frey, 2011; McDonagh, 2011). The peer coach or mentor needs to serve as a friend and confidante, that is, function in a non-evaluative role. The term *peer sharing and caring* among colleagues best describe the new spirit of collegial openness and learning advocated here.

### **Guidelines for Improving Support for Beginning Teachers**

Whatever the existing policies regarding the induction period for entry teachers, there is the need to improve provisions for their continued professional development (Friedman, 2012), to make the job easier, to make them feel more confident in the classroom and school, to reduce the isolation of their work settings, and to enhance interaction with colleagues (Burley, 2011). Here are some recommendations that school principals can implement for achieving these goals (Bulach, Lunenburg, & Potter, in press; Lunenburg & Irby, 2006).

- Principals need to schedule beginning teacher orientation in addition to regular teacher orientation. Beginning teachers need to attend both sessions.
- Principals need to appoint someone to help beginning teachers set up their classrooms.
- Principals need to provide beginning teachers with a proper mix of courses, students, facilities (not all leftovers). If possible, lighten their load for the first year.
- Principals need to assign extra-class duties of moderate difficulty and requiring moderate amounts of time, duties that will not become too demanding for the beginning teacher.
- Principals need to pair beginning teachers with master teachers to meet regularly to identify general problems before they become serious.
- Principals need to provide coaching groups, tutor groups, or collaborative problem-solving groups for all beginning teachers to attend. Encourage beginning teachers to teach each other.
- Principals need to provide for joint planning, team teaching, committee assignments, and other cooperative arrangements between new and experienced teachers.
- Principals need to issue newsletters that report on accomplishments of all teachers, especially beginning teachers.
- Principals need to schedule reinforcing events, involving beginning and experienced teachers, such as tutor-tutoree luncheons, parties, and awards.
- Principals need to provide regular (monthly) meetings between the beginning teacher and supervisor (mentor) to identify problems as soon as possible and to make recommendations for improvement.
- Principals need to plan special and continuing in-service activities with topics directly related to the needs and interests of beginning teachers. Eventually, integrate beginning professional development activities with regular professional development activities.
- Principals need to carry on regular evaluation of beginning teachers; evaluate strengths and weaknesses, present new information, demonstrate new skills, and provide opportunities for practice and feedback.

## Conclusion

Despite efforts to help beginning teachers succeed, many still experience problems, ranging from feelings of isolation to lack of support from experienced teachers and supervisors. The result is that nearly 50% of potentially talented and creative teachers leave the profession within five years. Ways to help beginning teachers succeed include providing professional development geared specifically toward the needs of beginning teachers; peer coaching or mentoring; easing up on the assignment of extra-class duties during the first year of service; and engaging beginning teachers in a reflective practice approach.

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## Mentors Accelerating Beginning Teacher and Student Learning

Ellen Moir, *NTC Executive Director*

All students need and deserve excellent instruction. The New Teacher Center's primary goal is an effective teacher in every classroom in the nation. In part, this means accelerating the development of new teachers. We know that the newest members of the profession are often hired to teach in schools where students, often facing the challenges of poverty, urgently depend on excellent instruction. Their teachers' success depends on targeted, tailored support. By meeting the developmental needs of new teachers and keeping a laser-sharp focus on the needs of students, New Teacher Center model induction programs change the arc of the new teacher's learning curve.

The successful mentoring of beginning teachers is key and includes a number of factors. The first is exemplary teaching practice. In order to efficaciously coach new teachers through the maze

of standards, benchmarks, pedagogies, planning lessons, and student assessment, mentors draw upon their own experiences as effective classroom instructors. They are able to quickly guide new teachers toward best practices, making sure there is sanctioned time to ask questions that allow new teachers to discover what is working in their classrooms as well as identifying and facing the challenges. This issue of *Reflections* examines effective mentor strategies, how they impact a new teacher's practice, and most importantly, their students' growth and learning.

A second aspect of a mentor's practice is building relationships within school sites and districts. We hold in high regard the work of school and program leaders in fostering environments that support new teachers and provide positive working conditions. The learning curve of a new teacher is accelerated by connections with many professionals—mentors, principals, peer



teachers, content coaches, and other special advisors. Each can make an important contribution to a new teacher's growing expertise. In "Cross-Site Insights: Making Exemplary Teacher Observations Effective," New Teacher Developers Kathleen Aldred, Elizabeth Kurkjian, and Victoria Hom describe the power that observing effective teachers in their classrooms has on the practice of two novice teachers. Laura Gschwend, Kathy Hope, and Laurie Stapleton of the Silicon Valley New Teacher Project, share the power of collaboration for novice teachers in their article, "Integrated Learning Cultures: Leveraging Induction to

NTC Induction Institute attendees John Andrastek and Paul Hegre confer with Regional Director Sharon Nelson and Ellen Moir.

Impact Teacher Effectiveness and Student Learning."

Focus on student learning and achievement is a third component of our work that informs mentors' interactions with new teachers, and subsequently, new teachers' interactions with students. Across the country, our new teachers are approaching their work with a relentless focus on instructional decision-making that directly

*Continued on page 3*

# A Reflection

## Looking in the Mirror to Improve Classroom Practice

By Robin Derr, *Durham Public Schools Mentor*

In September 2009, Ms. T., one of my beginning teachers announced, “I need help or I’m going to quit!” She teaches 3rd grade at one of the lowest performing schools in our district with ~86% poverty.

As I met with her, I was impressed when she added, “I need help. I just can’t teach this class the way I’ve taught before. Can you help me figure out how to teach this class?” She never once complained about the students, their parents, or their backgrounds. Her focus was on how to best meet the needs of these students.

We began by using a Collaborative Assessment Log to assess her most pressing concerns. During our conversation, Ms. T. identified a few students who were challenging. Atypical of many new teachers, Ms. T. stayed focused on how she could best meet their needs, rather than what was wrong with the students.

We agreed that I would use the selective scripting tool to collect specific data on these students. When we analyzed the scripts, we were able to classify the data into categories. From there we developed plans for both instructional strategies and behavior management. I shared some resources with

her. She immediately went to the media coordinator and asked her to purchase copies of one of the books, *The Pre-Referral Intervention Manual* by Steven McCarney, for the school’s professional library. Shortly thereafter, the school purchased three copies of the book, and she checked one out to help her develop specific strategies to work with the students she had identified as challenging.

In another conversation, Ms. T. wanted to know what she could do to improve student engagement. She wanted to move her students from ritual engagement to authentic engagement. Again, she did not blame the kids but remained focused on improving her teaching. We agreed that I would model a math lesson using some strategies for increasing student engagement.

As I modeled the lesson, Ms. T. took notes on my teaching strategies. After the lesson, I gave her a copy of the lesson plan and we discussed the strategies I used in the lesson. She not only picked up on most of them, but also noticed strategies I didn’t even realize I was modeling. We talked about how she could incorporate them into her teaching. During our conversation, her engagement was at a level I rarely see. I could tell she was listening to me and processing the information, but I was not prepared for what happened next. As soon as our meeting ended, she began incorporating some of the strategies into the lesson she taught ten minutes later.

Student engagement changed from ritualistic to authentic. As student engagement increased,

we began focusing on the process of learning. We developed strategies for increasing students’ thinking. As their thinking deepened, her students’ enthusiasm for learning increased. There was a noticeable increase in positive energy in this classroom.

After a couple of weeks, she posed another question: “What else can I do to meet these kids’ needs?” I suggested that we look at the students’ learning styles. We administered a simple inventory to her students and added the results to her class profile. As we compared the students’ grades and learning styles, we discovered that some of the auditory and kinesthetic learners were struggling while her teaching modality was primarily targeting visual learners.

*continued on following page*

### Student Test Scores 2010

Level of Student Proficiency	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Math	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter Math	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Reading	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter Reading	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Science	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter Science
1 <i>Significantly below grade level</i>	1	0	6	4	4	1
2 <i>Below grade level</i>	7	5	5	5	11	8
3 <i>At grade level</i>	12	11	5	7	5	10
4 <i>Above grade level</i>	0	3	0	1	0	1
<b>Percent Proficient</b> <i>at or above grade level</i>	60	74	28	42	25	55



Eileen Thibadeau, new teacher, (left) and Robin Derr, mentor.

We discussed ways to modify lessons and differentiate instruction based on her students' learning styles. She considered her students' different needs as she planned lessons and

remediated students who had not yet mastered concepts.

At the end of the first quarter, the students took district-administered benchmark exams to assess student achievement in math, reading, and science. Ms T.'s

students' scores revealed 60% proficiency in math, 28% proficiency in reading and 25% proficiency in science.

For the next nine weeks, Ms. T. consciously incorporated brain-engaging strategies as she taught her lessons, focused her questioning on improving student thinking and reasoning, analyzed data gathered from formal in informal assessments, and used the assessment data to inform her instruction.

At the end of the 2nd quarter, her students' scores revealed increases of 14% proficiency in both math and reading and a 30% increase in proficiency in science. (See chart) We both saw a correlation between the mentor strategies I used—modeling of lessons, collecting and analyzing student data through classroom observation and learning style surveys, providing resources and ideas, planning conferences, and reflecting conversations on practice—and her more effective teaching. It was truly validating for both of us to see higher student achievement as a result. ■

## MOIR *continued from page 1*

impacts student learning. This focus on learning and the concomitant habits of mind and practice propel a teacher's ability to achieve amazing results with students. We see examples of this sharp focus in Robin Derr's story, "A Reflection: Looking in the Mirror to improve Classroom Practice," and in "Online Mentoring Helps a New Teacher in an Urban School" we learn how online mentoring made the difference for Cissy Spear and her students. "Measuring the Impact of Mentoring on Student Achievement" by Cynthia Balthasar shares mentor assessment strategies being piloted by

the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project. "Full Release and Site Based Mentoring of New Elementary Grade Level Teachers: An Analysis of Changes in Student Achievement" summarizes the findings of NTC Researchers Michael Strong and Stephen Fletcher.

Where does this work ultimately lead? At NTC, we're focused on increased effectiveness of new teachers as measured by teacher practice and student learning, coupled with a heightened policy awareness of the need for high impact induction programs on a national scale. The article, "Measuring Teacher Effectiveness" summarizes the insights of



Ellen Moir at the New Teacher Center 2010 Symposium

Terry Holliday, Brad Jupp, and Tom Kane, who served on a panel facilitated by Eric Hirsch at our 2010 National Symposium of Teacher Induction. They explore how to effectively measure teacher effectiveness in the context of policy. We are

proud to contribute to this conversation on behalf of our work with mentors, new teachers, and school leaders across this country.

We hope that each article provides insights and perspectives to further the knowledge of what makes an effective teacher and how educators can provide the best support for new teachers to be that effective teacher that every student deserves. ■

# Integrated Professional Cultures

## Leveraging Induction to Impact Teacher Effectiveness and Student Learning

By Laura Gschwend, *Coordinator of Mentor Professional Development*, Laurie Stapleton, *Coordinator of Participating Teacher Professional Development*, and Kathy Hope, *Program Director, Silicon Valley New Teacher Project*

Professional teaching cultures shape how teachers approach and conduct their work. However, recent research indicates that new teachers continue to work in isolation, are expected to be prematurely expert and independent, and seldom share responsibility with veteran colleagues for student learning (Kardos & Moore Johnson, 2007). Partner districts in the Silicon Valley New Teacher Project (SVNTP) are trying to reverse that trend by providing high quality induction that impacts teacher effectiveness and student learning through many interventions, including development

of Integrated Professional Cultures (IPC). Susan Kardos and Susan Moore Johnson define IPC as “frequent and reciprocal interaction among faculty members across experience levels, recognizing new teachers’ needs as beginners, and developing shared responsibility among teachers for student achievement and school effectiveness.” (Kardos & Moore Johnson, 2007, p. 2083).

In schools and districts with Integrated Professional Cultures (IPC), new and veteran teachers share responsibility for their school, student learning, and each other’s professional growth. By replacing typical veteran vs. novice silos of practice

with structured, collaborative interactions, teachers assume responsibility for learning at their schools. Where reciprocal faculty interactions occur across grade level and content area, new teachers find it safe to seek help, and new teacher retention tends to improve (Kardos & Moore Johnson, 2007).

### Building Bridges from Induction to IPC

Induction programs are uniquely positioned to foster IPCs in schools and districts. Nearly all of the sixteen districts served by the Silicon Valley New Teacher Project (SVNTP) are developing some sort of IPC, often lead by SVNTP-trained district mentors.

Two of SVNTP’s high-need districts are implementing IPCs to improve student learning. With support from Applied Materials Foundation, teams composed of five new and five veteran teachers gather monthly at two school sites to learn and apply the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model of lesson design which purposefully shifts learning from teacher-as-model, to sharing joint responsibility for learning

with students. The lesson typically includes a focus lesson, guided interaction, collaborative learning, and independent practice. (Fisher and Frey (2008).

“IPCs are an equalizing factor—we’re all novices together,” says second year induction candidate, Mehdi Panahi, a science teacher at Overfelt High School. “Collaborating is not one plus one equals two; IPCs add up to more than the sum of the parts. Our department’s work this year has resulted in learning and practice opportunities that are opening up great possibilities for all of us.” Echoing Mr. Panahi’s perspective, science department chairperson Brian Barrientez adds, “We hone our collegial practice by everyone learning together with the same unifying purpose.”

### The Role of the Mentor

The mentor plays a key role in creating new and veteran teacher learning cultures. To support SVNTP mentors leading IPCs, mentors convene in Forums twice each month to learn how to plan and facilitate collaborative learning communities, using NTC Formative Assessment System tools to integrate professional cultures of new and veteran teachers.

At Overfelt High School and neighboring Linda Vista Elementary School, SVNTP-trained district mentors

*continued on following page*



New and veteran science teachers Ben Ellison, Felicia Arnold, James Radcliffe, and David Selby collaborate to apply the GRR Lesson Design model.

designed and facilitated learning communities for new and veteran teachers, before gradually releasing facilitation to a new and veteran teacher at each site. In this way, induction is integrated into the professional development of all teachers, which, according to Overfelt principal Vito Chiala, enhances new teacher induction into department or grade-level instructional efforts. In addition, says Mr. Chiala, “established collaboration periods increase motivation and accountability as teachers feel like their professional development is part of the school vision.”

At Linda Vista Elementary School in Alum Rock Union School District (ARUSD), SVNTP mentor Joanne Yinger guides new and veteran teachers in re-designing a packaged curriculum into Gradual Release lessons. “As soon as we began our IPC at Linda Vista, I envisioned this model being replicated around our district,” said Mrs. O’Maley, Coordinator of Academic Services. Through SVNTP’s focus on integrating the induction experiences of new teachers with the professional development of veteran teachers and administrators, Mrs. O’Maley believes “we can improve the conversations of all stakeholders about teaching and learning in our classrooms.”



Vito Chiala, principal at Overfelt High School, Mehdi Panahi, science teacher at Overfelt High School, Lynda Cannon Greene, Applied Materials Foundation, and Brian Barrientez, science department chairperson at Overfelt High School

### Induction, IPCs, and Student Results

Douglas Reeves (2008) found that at the school level, when only a few teachers implemented an effective practice, there was little impact on student learning. However, when 90% of the teachers implemented the same practice, a high percentage of students scored at the proficient level. Therefore, IPCs that develop common language and practices around instruction are more likely to impact achievement than in schools where induction is not aligned with district professional development initiatives. We are looking forward to SVNTP IPC data of impact, specifically student achievement toward the end of 2010.

In SVNTP, mentors are at the forefront in building shared responsibility for

student learning across the new-veteran teacher divide. Induction mentors use FAS

### New and veteran teachers learning together in collaborative, job embedded, data driven IPCs, are best positioned to meet the needs of diverse learners.

processes and tools to nurture a culture of teacher learning that far outlasts beginning teachers’ induction. New and veteran teachers learning together in collaborative, job embedded, data driven IPCs, are best positioned to meet the needs of diverse learners.

IPCs expand the work of SVNTP mentors beyond one-on-one mentoring. By taking the best of what induction has to offer, mentors who lead IPCs find themselves in the role of change agent making an important and systemic reform that nourishes high quality teaching in participating schools.

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Kardos, Susan, & Moore Johnson, Susan. (2007). “On Their Own and Presumed Expert: New Teachers’ Experience With Their Colleagues,” *Teachers College Record*, 109 (9), pp. 2083–2106.  
Reeves, Douglas. (2008). “Reframing Teacher Leadership: To Improve Your School.” Alexandria, VA: ASCD ■

# Full-Release and Site-Based Mentoring of New Elementary Grade Teachers

## An Analysis of Changes in Student Achievement

Stephen H. Fletcher and Michael A. Strong, *Researchers, University of California, Santa Cruz*

Induction support for new teachers is widespread, particularly in the form of mentoring, but research evidence of effectiveness is limited. The majority of existing research has focused on the impact of induction on teacher retention. Of greater interest is the potential impact on student achievement, and on which forms of support are the most effective. One frequently encountered option is between full-release or site-based mentors. This study examines these two mentoring options employed in one large urban district. While mentors received the same training, they differed in caseload and release time. A comparison of student achievement gains for classes taught by fourth and fifth grade new teachers, some of whom were supported by full-release mentors and some by site-based mentors, showed greater gains for classes of teachers in the full-release group, even though the demographic characteristics of the students would have led to the opposite prediction.

A large urban school district wanted to improve the support of new teachers by using a mentoring model. The district, though, did not have sufficient resources to have all mentors released from full time classroom duty. The district chose to have some teachers work as mentors full time (full-release) and others work as mentors within their own schools in addition to their own teaching schedule (site-based). The caseload for full-release mentors was 12–15 new teachers and one or two teachers for site-based mentors. The variation in mentor assignment provided the district with an opportunity to look at how release time and caseload differences may be related to changes in class level student achievement.

The study focused on teachers who taught fourth and fifth grades in 2006–2007. The district provided spring 2006 and spring 2007 achievement data on all students taught by the new teachers.

The study used the results of the state-testing program. The assessments were developed to monitor students' learning with respect to the state's curriculum standards. For spring 2006 and spring 2007,

English Language Arts and mathematics assessments were administered in grades 3–8 and 10, science and technology were administered in grades 5 and 8, and history and social science was

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**In the present climate of education in this country, where some kind of induction support is widely considered to be necessary for new teachers, there is a pressing need to learn which forms of support are the most effective.**

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administered in grades 5, 7 and high school. As we were interested in the change of student achievement across consecutive years, we chose to focus on English Language Arts and mathematics.

As student characteristics can account for differences in learning, it is important to look at similarities and differences in students taught by the new teachers supported by the two types of mentors. The results of our analysis indicate that, from student characteristics alone, achievement gains of students taught by site-based

mentors should exceed the gains of students taught by full-release mentors.

In the present climate of education in this country, where some kind of induction support is widely considered to be necessary for new teachers, there is a pressing need to learn which forms of support are the most effective. In particular, educators and policymakers are interested in programs that may have an impact on student learning. Much of the existing research on mentoring and induction focuses on possible connections with teacher retention, less on any relationship to student achievement. Existing research presents us with mixed findings, even regarding the effects of differing amounts of time spent with a mentor.

The purpose of the present study was to look at whether different forms of mentoring (as defined by whether the mentors were fully released from teaching or worked on-site while retaining a full teaching load) may be related to changes in student achievement. We found that whether we focus on fourth or fifth grade, or English language arts or mathematics, students associated with full-release mentors had better achievement gains than students associated with site-based mentors.

FLETCHER & STRONG  
*Continued on page 8*

# Measuring the Impact of Mentoring on Student Achievement

By Cynthia Balthaser, Program Director, Santa Cruz/Silicon Valley New Teacher Project

In education, we know that ongoing mentoring makes a difference for teachers and students. We experience it in our daily work with teachers as they grapple with challenges and celebrate successes. We have testimonies and quantitative data that attribute teacher efficacy and retention of teachers to mentoring. How can we take measuring the impact of mentoring one step further and measure its impact on student learning, growth and achievement? As part of their own professional development, the Santa Cruz/Silicon Valley New Teacher Project are investigating this question through a collaborative Inquiry Action Plan.



Entering into this inquiry has been like exploring a forest in the dark or working our way through a maze. We have followed paths that have not led us to our goal and yet, along the way we have made some surprising discoveries.

We chose to investigate the impact of mentoring on student learning for a variety of reasons. We mentor teachers with the ultimate goal of

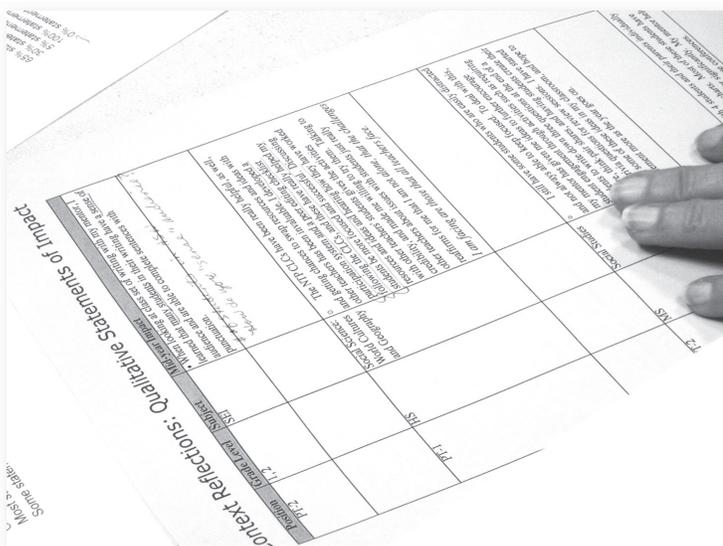
impacting student learning. It is critical that we assess our success in reaching this goal. Mentors, when working one-on-one with classroom teachers, have direct access to authentic student work. As opposed to measuring student achievement on a yearly standardized test, mentors and teachers can analyze student growth on specific learning outcomes connected to instruction. Finally, mentors collect a tremendous amount of data. In addition to using a wide variety of formative assessment tools with teachers, mentors record every dialogue with teachers on a Collaborative Assessment Log (CAL).

We began our inquiry by directly asking teachers “What impact has our work

Educators from Scotland learn about the Cycle of Inquiry—Mentoring Impact on Student Achievement from Santa Cruz and Silicon Valley NTP mentors.

together (mentoring) had on student learning?” Mentors recorded responses on the weekly Collaborative Assessment Logs, which we collected in a database. We also gathered impact statements from the teachers’ mid-year reflections. Analysis of the data revealed a wealth of qualitative, anecdotal evidence, such as the following statement from a fourth grade teacher: “My mentor supported me in integrating the gradual release model to increase students’ participation and performance. When I integrate the strategies, it seems to increase students’ writing proficiency.”

While new teacher reflections provided valuable data, mentors reported feeling awkward about asking teachers about the impact of mentoring, because it shifted the focus from the teacher to the mentor. We revised our question in three ways. First, we realized we had left the teacher out of the equation.



Mentors use this tool to record data of impact.

BALTHASER continued on page 8

FLETCHER & STRONG *continued from page 7*

The results of this study are interesting because the changes we observed in student achievement do not follow predictions indicated by the extant research literature, given the characteristics of the students and with all other things being equal. While we may reasonably hypothesize that the results are due to the different levels of intensity of mentoring, it is also possible that they may be accounted for by cross-school

differences, or some other unknown factors.

Although the present results should be interpreted with caution, we look for further work to be done, which, if the findings are similar, will add robustness to the findings presented here.

The study also illustrates the value of gradually implementing a program. The district in this study chose to try site-based and full-release mentor models in order to maximize their financial resources. The result was that district leaders learned how to support full-

release mentors as well as site-based mentors. Therefore, if the district's financial situation changed, either model could be expanded or contracted. In this way, staged implementation allows policy makers to collect data on program effectiveness. Staged implementation also gives district leaders a way to learn how to incorporate a new program into existing operations. Thus, this study is an illustration of an alternative method of implementing new programs, which may be useful to school districts.

*The New Educator*, 5:329–341, 2009. Copyright © The City College of New York, ISSN: 1549-9243 online. Address correspondence to Stephen H. Fletcher, 1073 Allen Way, Campbell, CA 95008. Email: shfletch57@sbcglobal.net Readers are free to copy, display, and distribute this article, as long as the work is attributed to the author(s) and *The New Educator* journal. It is distributed for noncommercial purposes only, and no alteration or transformation is made in the work. More details of this Creative Commons license are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>. All other uses must be approved by the author(s) or *The New Educator*. *The New Educator* is published by the School of Education at The City College of New York. ■

BALTHASER *continued from page 8*

Second, we were starting from the wrong direction. We decided to flip the question and ask about student learning first. Our question regarding the impact of mentoring on student learning came down to three questions:

1. What **achievement, growth or learning** have your students made? What is your evidence?
2. What **instructional decisions** did you make that affected this achievement?
3. What **impact** did your work with your mentor have on your instructional decisions?

At this point, we saw an opportunity to delve more deeply into the data and support teachers in re-defining it quantitatively. Teachers' perceptions shifted when they were asked to define qualitative statements such as "most students," "much

improved," "students are really getting a sense of" and "doing much better." One teacher reported that most of his students passed the high school proficiency exam. When the mentor asked to look at the data, they discovered that in reality, only 25% of the students had passed. In that critical moment, the mentoring conversation shifted from celebrating success to differentiating instruction.

This statement from a first grade teacher is typical of some responses we received: *"More than 75% of my students improved their reading fluency using the partner reading strategy as evidenced by comparing pre and post-assessments. The students made this progress/growth as a result of my decision to reinforce effort and provide recognition, provide cooperative learning*

*opportunities, model reading strategies, differentiated instruction by strategic partnering, and preview/review key vocabulary and challenging words. The students made this progress as a result of my mentor sharing resources with me, lesson planning with me, analyzing student work, observing me teach and providing feedback, problem solving with me, providing the opportunity for me to observe another teacher and debriefing with me."*

Clearly, it is difficult to assess a one to one correspondence among mentoring, teacher efficacy and student learning. Measuring the impact of mentoring is like measuring the impact of respect. It is complex, non-linear and an inter-connection of many mentoring actions.

Santa Cruz mentors are mid-way through the Inquiry Action Plan. In the

spring, we will be looking for quantitative evidence of impact of mentoring on student achievement in the teachers' Inquiry Action Plans. One thing has become clear: as a result of our inquiry, mentoring has shifted from focusing primarily on teacher efficacy to student learning. When we focus on student growth, we continue to build teacher effectiveness. Our mentor-teacher conversations have become more rigorous as we probe for measurable quantitative evidence of student learning.

Though we have not yet completed our inquiry and determined clear findings, an interesting phenomenon has occurred as we seek to measure the effect of mentoring on student achievement. We are discovering that by asking questions about the impact of mentoring, we are positively impacting mentoring. ■

## Online Mentoring Helps a New Teacher in an Urban School

Karen Ackland, *NTC Staff Writer*

**C**issy Spear, an 8th grade math teacher at North Middle School in Brockton, Massachusetts, didn't plan on working in an urban school. She was apprehensive about classroom management in an urban school. Because she started teaching after raising her family, she also wondered if she'd be perceived as too old. After earning her Initial Teaching License through the TEACH! Urban South program at the University of Massachusetts<sup>1</sup>, Cissy signed up to participate in the NTC *electronic Mentoring for Student Success* (eMSS) program.

### Electronic Mentoring for Student Success

eMSS supports the development and retention of beginning science, math, and special education teachers through content-specific online mentoring that promotes student achievement. Beginning teachers are matched with a mentor who has experience teaching the same discipline and grade level. In addition to the one-on-one mentoring, beginning teachers also share ideas and techniques with other beginning and veteran

teachers as well as university scientists, mathematicians, and special educators in a nationwide online network.

### Anytime. Anywhere.

Cissy was assigned to work with Deanna Reynolds, an award winning math teacher from North Dakota who has taught for twenty-two years. Both Deanna and Cissy liked being able to log in to the online environment and work anytime. "Deanna has been there for me every step of the way," said Cissy. "Our online conversations have bolstered my confidence as a teacher and given me tools that I use everyday." "Cissy is a super-star mentee," said Deanna. "She loves the support and as she's grown as a teacher, she's reached out to help others."

### Have you tried this?

Cissy logs on to the eMSS environment almost every day and is an active participant in the community. "I find eMSS invaluable," said Cissy. "There are so many resources and great ideas that I feel like a kid in a candy store. I'm always learning." Recently she posted a question about ways to engage her middle school students. Later in the day she received a number of suggestions that addressed student engagement and



Cissy Spear, Brockton Public Schools, Massachusetts

conflict resolution. One colleague suggested using a timer at the beginning of class and make a contest out of getting them to settle down. The record was 31 seconds. Now the kids monitor each other. Cissy has also incorporated math tidbits that a facilitator posted to help focus her warm-ups.

### Navigating an urban school

Cissy hesitated before accepting the position in Brockton. She'd worked previously as an aide in a vocational high school in the suburbs but immediately noticed a huge difference in the students, their parents, clothes, and language in North Junior High. "Thanks to eMSS, I don't feel isolated," said Cissy. "I know from the online community many other teachers are teaching in similar environments."

In Cissy's case, confidence building goes two ways. The demographics of the student body at North Middle School is over 70% minority, but the majority of the teachers are white. "As a woman of color, I think it's important for these kids to see an African American woman in a professional job," said Cissy. "I'm proud for the chance to serve as a role model."

### Mrs. Spear is proper

Although teaching in an urban environment wasn't her first choice, now Cissy can't imagine being anywhere else. "I'm not one of the 'cool teachers,'" Cissy said. "My students all know that 'Mrs. Spear is proper.'" She may be proper, but her students know that she works hard to keep them engaged. Thanks to the online support she receives from eMSS, she knows she can find the tools and community to continue to challenge her students. "This is my career, and I've having a blast," said Cissy. "They're a hard group of kids, but I'm not writing any of them off. I believe most of them are going to make it. I hope so." ■

<sup>1</sup> TEACH! is an alternative teacher preparation program that guides participants toward earning Massachusetts initial licensure to teach middle or high school math or science in an urban school district.

# Cross-Site Insights

## Making Exemplary Teacher Observations Effective

### Sophie

By Kathleen Aldred, *New Teacher Developer, Boston Public Schools*

Sophie was a new World Languages teacher who, while initially embarking upon an occupation in the travel industry, was excited about a new career teaching in the Boston Public Schools. Sophie was assigned to a small urban high school to teach Spanish I and II to juniors and seniors. She had a mix of non-Spanish and Heritage (students whose first language is not English) speakers and was the only language teacher on the faculty.

Sophie was assigned to me in September of 2008. As a New Teacher Developer in the Boston Public Schools, I had worked with teachers across many disciplines, but never World Languages (WL). Easily accessible state frameworks and district standards became a starting point for me.

The next week I observed in two of Sophie's classes. She took a very traditional approach to teaching. Greetings, instruction, and directions were all in English. Students completed many reading and writing activities from the textbook. She asked questions in English, and

the students were expected to answer in Spanish. The Heritage speakers answered most of the questions and their classmates looked to them for direction. Sophie's students were diligent in completing exercises, but engagement was not high.

As I got to know Sophie better, I learned that she had grown up in Europe. Her first language was French, her second Spanish. English was her third language, which she spoke flawlessly. She taught her classes pretty much the way she had learned in school: the lecture method with little input from students.

Anxious to help Sophie make her Spanish classes more engaging, I visited the classroom of another World Languages teacher, who was highly thought of by the WL Department in the district. I observed that all instruction took place in Spanish, that students responded in Spanish, even in a Spanish One class. The class was mainly oral, with much less time devoted to reading and writing than in Sophie's. I was excited and suggested that Sophie introduce more oral language into her teaching, but she felt that because she



Clockwise from left: Victoria Hom, Kathleen Aldred, and Elizabeth Kurkjian-Henry

move to a different classroom for each class, she could manage the situation better if her students were held accountable for reading passages and answering questions in writing.

In January of 2009, two things happened that encouraged Sophie to change her approach. The district supports a practice called 'cross-site visits' where new teachers get together in small groups and observe in the classrooms of exemplary teachers, coordinated by a New Teacher Developer. Also, in Sophie's case, she would be getting a new group of students at the end of January as her school is on the semester system.

She would also be teaching in only two side-by-side classrooms, so there was less traveling and more wall space available.

Sophie, two other first-year World Language teachers, and I visited the classrooms of two exemplary veteran teachers in early January. These classes were taught entirely in Spanish, and the students spoke solely in Spanish. Sophie took note of this immediately and asked many questions of the teachers as we met with them after the lessons. This day proved to be a turning point in Sophie's practice. During a lunch debrief, Sophie was very excited and set a goal to begin the new semester by requiring students to speak only in Spanish. She planned and executed anchor charts with sentence stems and simple requests. One of the teachers promised to share ideas and strategies with her, and they set up an email system. The other teacher also shared a full binder of oral language activities as well as anchor charts. Together they discussed strategies and set goals. One other teacher bonded with Sophie and they decided to jointly implement ten oral language activities, each in their own classroom, and reflect jointly on the outcomes. Both teachers remained in close contact for

SOPHIE continued on page 13

# Two Cases: Sophie & Eva

## Eva

By Elizabeth Kurkjian-Henry,  
New Teacher Developer &  
Victoria Hom, Senior Program  
Manager, New Teacher  
Development Program

“I just wish I could see someone do this well,” lamented Eva, one of my new teachers, last fall. Eva had been assigned a 6th, 7th and 8th grade English as a Second Language (ESL) class and English/Language Arts classes for English Language Learners at one of the most needy schools in the Boston Public Schools. It was her first time in her own classroom as a Teach For America corps member. Eva was of Puerto Rican descent and knew Spanish fairly well. But she was struggling. The students were viewing 23 year-old Eva as their friend, older sister, cute aunty—everything except *maestra*. She had no connections to an experienced on-site ESL teacher and wanted desperately to observe a top-notch middle school teacher of students whose first language is Spanish. Eva needed to observe teaching strategies and ways to demonstrate respect for her students’ diverse cultures (Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras and Colombia), while implementing consistent classroom management. She needed

to see an ESL classroom that worked well with a teacher who would make transparent teaching practices that Eva could try.

I put out a call to my full-time New Teacher Developer (full-release mentor) colleagues: Did anyone know of such a teacher in any of their schools? Emily, a co-worker, suggested Nina, who taught Grade 6 ESL at a nearby middle school with a similar student population as Eva’s.

Since the inception of our district’s mentoring program in 2006, we have arranged for cross-site visits each February and March. Emily and I were not sure how Nina would feel about welcoming two new ESL teachers (one of Emily’s new teachers, Deborah, also had expressed an interest in observing) so early in the year. But Nina was willing, almost excited, about the visit. What we observed that day impressed or—more accurately—blew away our new teachers, and left Emily and me awe-struck. Nina’s students were respected and respectful, there was a constant “work buzz” in the room, and transitions were seamless. What struck us most was how invested in learning everyone—students, paraprofessional and teacher—seemed to be, and how *happy* they were to be so invested. This was not a classroom so much as a learning community.

Each year, new teachers are offered the opportunity for cross-site visits. Over the last three years, approximately 300 new teachers have participated in these visits, which have allowed them not only to observe the practice of exemplary teachers, but also to gain strategies, resources, and tools, plus the chance to network with other teachers in the district.

Feedback has been extremely positive. In 2008–2009, 94% of our survey respondents reported that the experience of the exemplary teacher cross-site visits was helpful to their instructional practice. One teacher shared, “These visits were a wonderful opportunity... I am so grateful for this initiative, and I found that it helped me identify both what I am doing well and what I need to work on in my own classroom.” At the same time, we detected a trend: teachers were asking for better subject and grade-level matches as well as visits earlier in the year. Some said, “I loved it, I just wish it had been earlier in the year” or “I have no suggestions except [to] keep providing opportunities for folks in the district to do this more often.” As a result, in addition to the larger-scale visits that take place in February and March, we opened up the opportunity for earlier, less formal visits.

We have learned that there are certainly benefits to either approach. With our traditional process, a greater number

of new teachers are able to participate, have opportunities to meet with and network with more peers, and if they are not with a group led by their New Teacher Developer, benefit from different perspectives and styles of other New Teacher Developers. On the other hand, a more organic, rolling-basis approach frees us from a “one size fits all” paradigm and allows for a timelier meeting of the new teacher’s needs. Indeed, if you see the need in your new teacher, act on it. Have that list of exemplary teachers ready. Establish relationships beforehand. Ask if they are willing to invite a new teacher in to observe.

Now Eva, Deborah and Nina have an ongoing relationship. As Deborah and Nina teach in the same school, Deborah feels free to drop in to observe Nina, take notes, and learn whenever she can. Eva and Nina, who work in different schools, have a strong mentor/mentee relationship and have met several times during days off. Eva feels comfortable emailing or phoning Nina and values her perspective and suggestions. As her New Teacher Developer, I have seen Eva try out routines and strategies that she has observed in Nina’s classroom and heard her say, “Yes, I can!” as she successfully implements them. What began as a one-time observation has evolved into a valuable relationship. ■

# Measuring Teacher Effectiveness

## Symposium Panel

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is shifting policy discussion from a focus on teacher qualification to effectiveness. Moreover, the dialogue is honing in on a single question: *How can we measure teacher effectiveness in a systematic way?* At the 12<sup>th</sup> National New Teacher Center (NTC) Symposium, NTC Director of Special Projects Eric Hirsch facilitated a keynote panel discussion with three expert witnesses. Terry Holliday, Commissioner of Education, Kentucky Department of Education; Brad Jupp, Senior Program Advisor to Teacher Effectiveness and Quality, United States Department of

Education; and Tom Kane, Professor of Education and Economics, Director of *Project for Policy Innovation in Education* at Harvard University and Deputy Director of Education for the U.S. Program of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation offered ideas from three distinct vantage points on conceptualizing teacher effectiveness and the implications for new teacher and principal support.

To begin, Hirsch provided an overview of the shifting opinions among educators and the audience on how best to ascertain teacher effectiveness. (See graphs of participant responses.)

Hirsch reminded us that for mentoring to have maximum impact, it must take place in schools with supportive leaders who develop a culture of trust,



empower educators, and find time for them to work together. These conditions can be catalysts or constraints. The conversation must extend beyond teacher retention to focus on keeping the right teachers and comprehensively supporting them. Hirsch posed several questions about measuring teacher effectiveness: How do we know who the “right” teachers are? What is an effective teacher? Is it fair to evaluate teacher effectiveness without autonomy, support, and high quality induction?

The panelists offered different ideas on effective measures of teacher effectiveness:

From a research perspective, Tom Kane cautioned that there must be multiple measures of teacher effectiveness, including student gains on state and supplemental tests, videotaped classroom observations of teachers and students, student feedback, teacher scores on tests for pedagogical and content knowledge, and teacher

Eric Hirsch, left, facilitates a panel composed of policy experts Tom Kane, Terry Holliday, and Brad Jupp at the 2010 NTC Symposium.

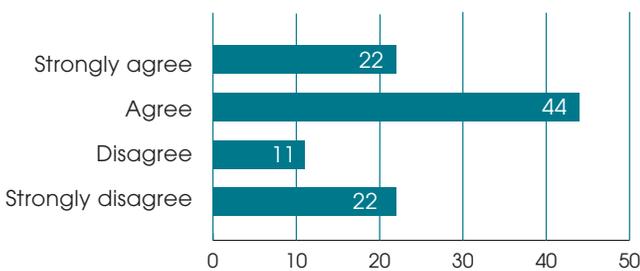
feedback on instructional support they receive. Further, measures should be weighted according to their predictive power in determining student outcomes. He stressed the importance of demonstrating evidence of student achievement gains as essential in assessing effectiveness. Kane shared the importance of using technology such as videos of instruction to create new avenues for feedback—student to teacher, teacher to teacher, teacher to principal and district leaders.

With a lens on state policy, Commissioner Holliday stressed the importance of measuring the support that teachers receive—how effectively principals and systems create conditions for success. Holliday underscored

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### Race to the Top Definition of Effective Teachers

Under Race to the Top, the U.S. Department of Education defines an effective teacher as one whose students achieve acceptable rates of student growth. States, districts, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth. How strongly do you agree that this correctly defines an effective teacher?



the role of effective principals and suggested a system wherein principals are coached by master teachers and use reliable classroom observation tools to collect data. Holliday complimented the federal DOE's efforts to help educators focus on the "right stuff" through the *Race to the Top* regulations and reminded everyone that teachers must be at the table to find answers to improving instruction.

Speaking from the federal perspective, Brad Jupp explained that *Race to the Top* defines an effective teacher as one whose students achieve acceptable rates of growth on multiple measures. Jupp suggested that teacher pay should be based on accurately measured student growth.. President Obama's goal of increasing the number of successful college-going students is the "right goal," according to Jupp. "It's what parents want for their children."

He offered concrete actions for educators and policymakers to attain this ambitious goal:

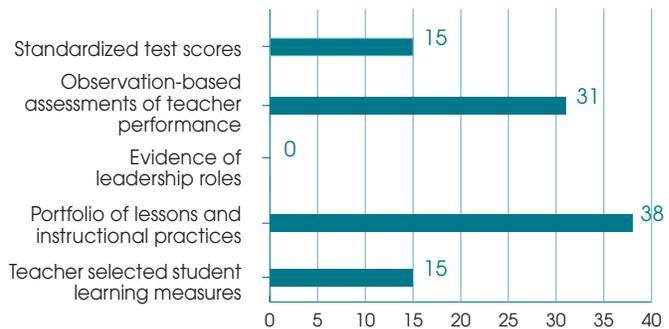
- Sharing good (reliable) data

- Student access to effective teachers and principals
- Emphasis on deep thinking
- Federal government focusing on changing the circumstances in long-term, low performing schools

Jupp mentioned the important role organizations like the NTC play in this because of their ability to scale operations nationally. With the sheer number of schools performing under par, Jupp reasoned that the greatest leverage point for change is the teaching force, and teachers need concerted and targeted support to become effective.

In response to a question about incentives posed by Eric Hirsch, Jupp validated Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's common sense approach: "We need more carrots and fewer sticks. Education has been a victim of top-down mandates for so long, that educators tend to shrug off reform. We have to build ownership for the success of reforms, and inspire strong willed pro-activity."

## Which of the following is the BEST measure of teacher effectiveness?



He mentioned the new grant capacity of Title II funding to focus on teacher and administrator preparation programs.

Hirsch asked about whether an emphasis on assessed subjects such as reading and math may result in a decline of focus on other subjects such as science and the arts. Jupp agreed that we must assess every subject and use effective technology for formative assessment, beginning in areas where we can test and then moving out to other subjects. We can use formative assessment as evidence of growth.

As states submit their Phase II *Race to the Top* applications and Congress considers ESEA reauthorization, questions still linger about how to measure and evaluate quality teaching. However, the panelists all agreed that induction and mentoring are essential elements in any state strategy to ensure all new teachers have the opportunity to be as effective as they can possibly be. ■

SOPHIE *continued from page 10*

the rest of the school year. With additional support and networking, Sophie was able to achieve the goal of an oral based classroom, something she thought impossible in September.

When I last visited Sophie's classroom, anchor charts and

language were displayed on the walls, and I heard the hum of student voices—speaking Spanish!

In place of the endless quizzes and tests that were the hallmark of her first semester, there were student projects everywhere. Students spoke in Spanish with confidence and laughed when they

got a verb tense mixed up. Sophie had nicely balanced the four hallmarks of second language learning—speaking, listening, reading and writing—in her teaching. Her students were thriving, and she eagerly looked forward to her second year. Sophie set a second goal for herself for the upcoming school year:

to challenge the Heritage students academically. She would like to offer classes for Heritage speakers because she feels they have unique needs and are ready for greater challenge. She has already presented a proposal to her headmaster. ■

## Data Dive

### New Teachers in Chicago Public Schools Take the Plunge

By Leslie Baldacci, *Coach, Chicago Public Schools*

Data drives the New Teacher Center's work in Chicago: in coaching relationships, in classrooms, throughout the organization, and across Chicago Public Schools at every level. Here are snapshots of how data is being gathered and used in coaching, teaching and evaluation in Chicago.

#### How Coaches Use Data

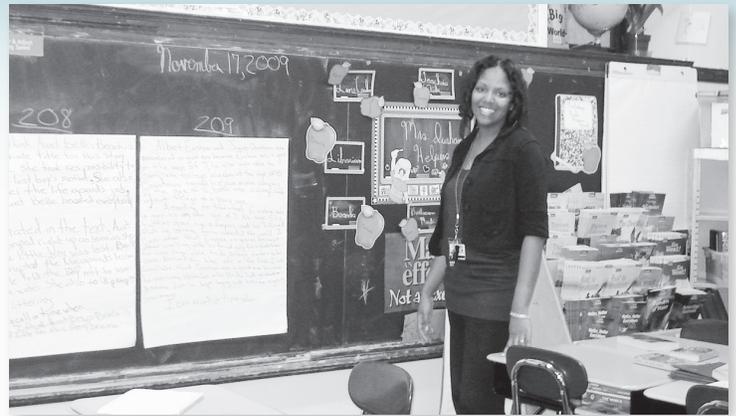
Chicago New Teacher Center has collected and tracked data about its work with first and second-year CPS teachers since its inception in 2006. Coaches log every interaction with new teachers, detailing their work through NTC Formative Assessment System (FAS) and online coaching logs. Electronic logs via Quickbase include dates and lengths of visits, the nature of interactions (observation, conference, working with students, etc.), a narrative description of the visit and FAS tools used.

CNTC's citywide expansion this year added another layer of accountability through upgraded collection and reporting systems grounded in Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Professional Teaching Standards

which provide a common foundation for the work of beginning teachers and coaches. The latest Quickbase upgrade classifies coaching visits according to the four domains of Danielson's Framework: planning and preparation, instruction, classroom environment and professional responsibilities. Contributing to increased alignment in the system, CPS is in its second year of piloting the use of Danielson's Framework for teacher evaluations. Finally, CPS is piloting use of Danielson's Framework for Instructional Coaching in evaluations of CNTC coaches this year.

Coaches can manipulate Quickbase data to reveal specific information about their work with teachers. The data inform coaches as to the focus of their work with individual teachers, guide their future work, and provide a picture of their overall performance.

CNTC data document improved retention among new teachers who receive coaching. Now the drive is on to prove a similar link to student achievement. Toward that end, CNTC commissioned the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago to examine the practice of beginning teachers and the work of coaches this year.



#### How Teachers Use Data

Today CPS new teachers enter a data-charged environment. They are expected to scrutinize student performance down to individual answers on specific test questions. Especially at lower-achieving schools, where novices are most likely to be hired, the pressure is on to improve student achievement or face probation, reconstitution or even school closing.

Teachers use STEP (Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress) and Benchmark Assessment (Fountas & Pinnell) systems to track elementary student progress in reading. Learning First and Scantron testing monitor student progress across the curriculum. Teachers use these assessments to track trends, identify student learning needs and plan instruction. The programs also can be used to generate quizzes, study guides and worksheets.

As informative as the data can be, coaches hear teachers lament that time spent testing means less time for instruction. Many fear losing

Chicago new teacher  
Taiesha Woodson-Durham

their jobs if students do not perform well on tests.

#### Chicago's Data-Driven Leader

When Ron Huberman was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools a year ago, he brought with him the performance management system he honed at his previous job as president of the Chicago Transit Authority. With an MBA from the University of Chicago, Huberman formerly served as Mayor Daley's chief of staff and headed the city's Office of Emergency Management.

Under his watch, "walk-throughs" of recent years have given way to performance management sessions, deep looks into individual schools through the lens of data. These "data dives" probe specific areas of a school's profile: attendance, mobility,

*Continued on following page*

## NEW AT NTC

### Product and Services Catalog

The New Teacher Center's updated product and services catalog is now available. This comprehensive document includes all NTC professional development, products, and resources available as well as information on surveys, consultation and customization of products. download the new catalog at [www.newteachercenter.org/pdfs/NTC\\_ProductCatalog.pdf](http://www.newteachercenter.org/pdfs/NTC_ProductCatalog.pdf).

### Instructional Mentoring Professional Development Online

Facilitated now as an online course, this three-week professional development workshop provides mentors with foundational knowledge and skills that help them assess and support new teachers' developmental and contextual needs. For more information, visit our website at [www.newteachercenter.org/ti/menu.php?p=iim](http://www.newteachercenter.org/ti/menu.php?p=iim).

### New Practice Brief *Mentor Assessment and Accountability: Promoting Growth*

The NTC advocates a multi-faceted, growth-oriented system of support and accountability for mentors that includes a range of procedures, tools, and protocols for mentor professional development, supervision, assessment, and accountability. This practice brief offers ideas, suggestions, and possible tools and strategies for assessment for mentor growth and accountability. Download the new practice brief at [www.newteachercenter.org/pdfs/MAA\\_brief.pdf](http://www.newteachercenter.org/pdfs/MAA_brief.pdf).

### Save the Date • Thirteenth National Symposium on Teacher Induction

Pre-Conference: **January 30, 2011**  
Symposium: **January 31–February 1, 2011**  
Fairmont Hotel, San Jose, California

For more information, visit [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org)

student learning as measured by ISAT scores, and individual classroom performance in reading and math as measured by STEP and Benchmark Assessment data as well as scores from Scantron and Learning First tests.

Sometimes collegial, sometimes punishing, these sessions, led by Chief Area Officers, gather principals from across an Area to focus on the statistical profile of a school, its classrooms and students. Administrators and teachers from the spotlighted school respond to questions and help formulate "next steps."

### Tying student data to instruction

The goal of all this assessment and analysis is, of course, improving student learning and achievement. As part of its coaching work this year, Chicago New Teacher Center has offered several study groups focused on the Analyzing Student Work formative assessment tool. Coaches lead small groups of teachers through the process of analyzing work samples and using the data

to identify learning needs, group students and plan for differentiated instruction.

Within the organization, "peer coaching" partners scrutinize logs, tool use and teachers' Individual Learning Plans to help each other advance and focus work with specific individual teachers. This "two heads are better than one" approach has clarified new teacher learning needs, resulting in additional study groups for new teachers, professional development for entire school staffs, site visits and planned observations for teachers and other collaborative activities tied to student learning needs.

As this rigorous data collection and analysis continues at all levels within Chicago Public Schools, CNTC's work is making a difference for students in their classrooms by helping new teachers deliver intentional and targeted instruction every day. ■

Beginning teachers attending a monthly working meeting.



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A special thanks to the **Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation** for their support of this issue of *Reflections*.

We wish to thank the following organizations for their support of the New Teacher Center:

Agilent Technologies Foundation  
Applied Materials Foundation  
Avi Chai Foundation  
S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation  
Boeing Company Charitable Trust  
S. H. Cowell Foundation  
Crown Family Philanthropies  
The DuBarry Foundation  
Finnegan Family Foundation  
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TOSA Foundation  
Toshiba America Foundation  
UJA Federation of New York  
Yellow Chair Foundation

*Reflections* Staff:

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Felton Ward Design,  
Design and Production

Printed by Community Printers,  
Santa Cruz, CA

## About the New Teacher Center

The New Teacher Center is a national organization dedicated to improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders. NTC strengthens school communities through proven mentoring and professional development programs, online learning environments, policy advocacy, and research. Since 1998, the NTC has served over 49,000 teachers and 5,000 mentors, touching millions of students across America.



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## Accelerating Teacher Talent and Student Success



By Ellen Moir, NTC Founder and CEO

Each of our nation's students has a right to an excellent education.

Research has shown that the most important school-based factor in a student's academic success is the teacher. Now, the national dialogue has caught up to what we have known for years: if we focus on teaching, our students succeed.

But great teachers are made, not born. It takes a strategic, systems-level approach to ensure outstanding teachers. It takes time and commitment to invest in teacher development. It must engage and align multiple stakeholders: superintendents, labor unions, principals, and teachers. It also requires engaging system wide levers: rigorous teacher recruitment, strong teacher induction systems, meaningful teacher evaluation that uses feedback to inform growth, effective school leader engagement and development, and career ladders and lattices that offer teachers opportunities to use their talents in new ways.

One important aspect of developing teacher talent is a strong induction system. This Summer 2012 issue of *Reflections* examines the many aspects of building a system that accelerates the capabilities of new teachers, exemplary teachers who are their mentors, and school leaders, all in the service of student learning.

Most successful induction programs are part of the district's talent development and include differential instructional support for new teachers. It requires rigorous program design, evaluation for continuous improvement, and the right conditions for success. The most sustainable and effective programs employ a nested approach, in which the teacher development operates at multiple levels. In "Comprehensive Systems of Teacher Induction," New Teacher Center's Janet Gless provides insight into a systems-level approach to teacher induction and shares NTC's Program Theory of Action. NTC's Lori McNulty-Pope and Hillsborough County School District's Jamalya N. Jackson describe how that theory plays out in practice in "Key Components of Hillsborough's Comprehensive



TEACHER AND MENTOR AT SYLVIA CASSELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAN JOSE, CA

Induction Program." Hillsborough County School District's induction system, situated within a broader district strategic talent development system, is an exemplar of this nested approach and a model for district talent development.

Another key aspect of systemic new teacher development is rigorous and meaningful program evaluation. Measuring a program's impact is key for data-driven continuous improvement and making the case to continue investing in the work. In "Counting What Counts: Measuring Impact in a Comprehensive Induction Program," NTC's Srikanth Gopalakrishnan shares goals, guidelines, and a roadmap for meaningful induction program evaluation.

Engaging school leaders is a key part of new teacher development. After teachers, school leaders are the second-most important school-based factor in a student's success.<sup>1</sup> Just as great teachers are made, so are great school leaders. In "Comprehensive Leadership Development," NTC's Mike Heffner and Sid Haro examine the importance of strong instructional leadership, how to build a pipeline, and offer differentiated support for new principals. It is critical for principals to provide teachers instructional leadership, including meaningful feedback.

Boston Public Schools (BPS) has been in partnership with NTC for several years. In "Induction in Boston

MOIR *continued on page 5*

<sup>1</sup> Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B., *School Leadership That Works: From Research to Results*, ASCD, 2005.

# The Big Picture: Comprehensive Systems of Teacher Induction

By Janet Gless, NTC Chief Officer, Programs and Partnerships

In current literature, school districts, and educational agencies nationwide, there is no common definition of a *program of teacher induction*. In many places, it refers to an *orientation* for beginning teachers or teachers new to a district prior to the start of the school year. Some districts consider it one-on-one *mentoring* where veteran classroom teachers support new teachers. Most often, the mentor is a site-based teacher appointed by the principal to provide resources, emotional support, and guidance. Other districts use an array of *professional development*—required, or voluntary—to fill in perceived pre-service gaps or ensure that new teachers are *up to speed* on district curriculum and instructional initiatives.

Recent efforts to revise teacher *evaluation* systems nationwide have led many districts to conceptualize teacher induction as a program that carefully assesses a teacher’s progress towards effectiveness via more frequent classroom observations by administrators and occasionally peer evaluators. In a few states, California most notably, teacher induction programs are required for *licensure*.

NTC sees all these elements as important to the success of a new teacher. Yet programs that rely on just one or two of the components cannot ensure significant impact on teacher

effectiveness and student learning. In fact, University of Pennsylvania Professor Richard Ingersoll’s recent national study finds that no one component impacts new teachers’ decisions to remain in teaching or their perceived success.

Informed by over two decades of work with hundreds of school districts and state agencies and committed to increasing student learning by accelerating new teachers effectiveness, NTC has found that a comprehensive and systemic approach to teacher induction is essential. This is illustrated by the graphic below: NTC’s Program Theory of Action. It includes the vision, provides a road map and guides and helps to assess a program’s progress.

The *Program Theory of Action (ToA)* suggests three programmatic considerations: 1) impact; 2) program design; 3) conditions for success. These help to guide NTC and school districts and state agencies while conveying a vision of induction as a comprehensive program within a larger system of human capital development.

## Impact

The ultimate beneficiary of a comprehensive induction program is the student. A growing body of research shows that students taught by teachers who receive comprehensive induction support for at least two years demonstrate significantly higher learning gains.

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The impact on student learning is predicated upon areas where the induction program can have direct impact:

1. Teacher effectiveness
2. Teacher retention
3. Teacher leadership

Focused, comprehensive induction helps teachers get better faster, sometimes surpassing veteran colleagues. Successful teachers are more likely to stay in the profession; numerous programs point to dramatic increases in teacher retention, even in hard-to-staff schools. Strong programs not only advance the careers of experienced teachers who serve as instructional mentors, but also foster new teacher leadership.

### Program Design

The millions of students taught each year by beginning teachers are in the center since their success is at the heart of the program. Encircling those students are the beginning teachers who are encircled by instructional mentors. All are nested within the comprehensive program.

The components essential for program success are:

- Capable Instructional Mentors
- Effective Principals
- Multiple Support Structures for Beginning Teachers
- Strong Program Leaders
- Ongoing Program Evaluation

#### *Capable Instructional Mentors*

Mentoring new teachers is complex and demanding work and requires a specific set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. To become effective teachers of teachers, teachers need focused preparation, ongoing professional development, a community of practice focused on the complexities of accelerating new teachers' practice, and opportunities to engage in formative assessment to advance their own effectiveness.

#### *Effective Principals*

The principal's influence on a beginning teacher cannot be overestimated. Thus, comprehensive induction efforts also focus on building the capacity of principals and other site leaders to create environments where new teachers thrive. Supporting principals in utilizing standards-based supervision and evaluation practices and providing meaningful feedback strengthen the entire system of human capital development.

#### *Multiple Support Structures for Beginning Teachers*

New teachers also need specialized support beyond the principal and instructional mentor. Comprehensive programs include systematic protocols that help mentors and beginning teachers collect and analyze data of

practice and student learning, use those data to make formative assessments, and identify and make adjustments to help students learn more. Other important structures include a community of practice for beginning teachers facilitated by instructional mentors and guided by professional teaching standards, Common Core Standards, differentiated instruction, academic literacy, innovative technology, and other instructional priorities.

#### *Strong Program Leaders*

An effective program leader understands the potential of comprehensive teacher induction to leverage change. Strong programs require leaders with vision that reaches beyond the initial years of a teacher's practice.

#### *Program Evaluation*

Program evaluation is critical for continuous improvement. It involves the regular collection of data of implementation and impact to improve the program. Stakeholder surveys; artifacts of program implementation; quantitative data of teacher satisfaction, effectiveness, retention; focus groups and interviews can collect data to improve programs.

### Conditions for Success

There are five conditions essential for program success. A comprehensive approach cannot stand alone, but is embedded in the larger system of teacher development. The quality of the mentors must demonstrate professionalism, vanguard thinking, excellence in practice, and a positive impact on student learning. Principals are instructional leaders who recognize and value this investment. All stakeholders must value teacher induction and support its implementation. And the conditions at school sites must build the efficacy of new teachers.

In 2011, NTC published *Induction Program Standards (IPS)*, which serve as a framework for program design, implementation, and evaluation. These standards are grouped under three essential program components:

1. The **foundational** program standards provide the platform upon which an induction program is built. They underscore the need for strong leadership, a shared vision, realistic allocation of resources and principal engagement.
2. The **structural** standards encompass instructional mentors; mentor preparation, development, and ongoing support, formative assessment for new teachers; and targeted professional learning for new teachers. These standards focus on services and supports for both mentors and beginning teachers.

GLESS *continued on page 5*

# Key Components of Hillsborough’s Comprehensive Induction Program

By Lori McNulty-Pope, NTC Associate Program Consultant, Programs and Partnerships and Jamalya N. Jackson, Director of Professional Development and New Teacher Induction, Hillsborough County Public Schools

Hillsborough County is nearing the end of its second year of partnership with the New Teacher Center (NTC), and each year we have added multiple layers of support. Next year we will expand NTC’s services to include teacher induction for approximately 1,500 beginning teachers, 90 full time mentors who also function as peer evaluators, new principal induction, principal coaches, and support for principal supervisors. This increasing district-wide support has more value than the acceleration of teachers and principals—an increase in communication, district coordination, and impact within and outside the district.

## Communication

Because communication is critical within a district, teachers, especially new teachers, have consistent messaging. This becomes much easier when mentors, new principals, area directors, and multiple stakeholders use consistent protocols and language. One middle school principal noted, “Leading instruction and guiding teachers through the lens and expertise of multiple sources has provided an in-depth and comprehensive approach to truly improving educational

growth for children. I am highly appreciative of the measurable results of NTC and how it involves collaborative conversations in the process and with proven results.”

These protocols and language are cross-pollinating into veteran teacher and principal culture. Many beginning teachers have already begun using NTC’s Analysis of Student Work within their professional learning communities. As teachers exit the Teacher Induction Program as veterans, and more mentors transition back into the teaching community, we anticipate an increase in open, data-based conversations about practice. Although this isn’t always easy work, mentors are seeing a shift in the culture around observation and data-driven discussion. Sherri, a new teacher emailed her mentor, “I am so happy with the constructive feedback I receive from you and I have learned so much from the past observations with you. My mouth still goes dry and I am a nervous wreck the days before but I know that I will come out with some great ideas to implement to help me become a better teacher. Thank you so much for helping to make my first year so great!”

## District Coordination

Coordination and implementation of district initiatives have also been streamlined due to the multiple levels of support. With mentors in most buildings, and principal coaches supporting an ever increasing number of administrators, district-wide initiatives can be implemented more easily and quickly. Woodland, an elementary school principal, affirmed, “The mentoring program has helped new teachers by providing quality assistance in the areas of instruction and classroom management... The mentor helps new teachers answer the questions they do not know to ask. In other words, they give them insight into the *hows* to working in a school and with others.”

## Increased Impact

To increase the impact of any new program, it is critical to light the fire at both virtual ends, top and bottom, instead of the more common trickle-up or trickle-down approach. When asking new teachers what aspect of the Teacher Induction



A BEGINNING TEACHER AND STUDENTS, O. S. HUBBARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAN JOSE, CA

*continued on following page*

Program had the greatest impact on their students' learning, one high school teacher responded, "Based on the mentoring I've received, I applaud seeing the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation money being put to good use. Meeting with my mentor...weekly...adds to my being a reflective teacher, accessing resources I may not be familiar with, explaining policies, and showing me how a new strategy actually looks in practice. In turn, my students benefit from my continued learning and professional dialogue." Principals and their coaches agree. Holly, a principal, reflected, "Having the support of a mentor knowledgeable in curriculum has accelerated and deepened first year teacher knowledge in both content and navigation of the system, ultimately improving student learning." Multiple levels of service have helped us become aware of possible integration of information and services with local departments.

### Broader Collaboration

Another benefit of partnering with NTC has been making new connections with states and districts nationwide. We discussed professional development structures and planning with a district administrator in the Chicago Public Schools. It was helpful to hear a different perspective and realize we have so much in common. Hillsborough is also receiving much attention from districts around the country for its focus on the multiple layers of principal and teacher induction. We have spoken at national conferences and hosted visits for educational stakeholders interested in our comprehensive model.

### In Conclusion

Rachel, a new teacher, was so appreciative of her coach she publicly thanked her. "I just wanted to send a big thank you to you and the district for the implementation of the Principal's Pipeline," she said. "I feel so fortunate to have a coach I can turn to regularly in order to improve my skills as a leader. My coach has been able to observe me deal with an upset parent, post conference with a challenging teacher, ...and she provided me with valuable feedback regarding my way of work." One coach commented, "I appreciate the NTC trainings. I have been able to use numerous ideas to make my meetings more meaningful. It's a great program which will only improve over time, and I'm glad I get to be a part of it." Many of us feel the same way. Our partnership with New Teacher Center has been a growth experience that we look forward to continuing. ■

Public Schools: Lessons Learned in Communication and Collaboration," BPS's Tamika Estwick and Victoria Hom share key concepts they find crucial in building a comprehensive induction program that lasts.

Since 1998, NTC has learned a great deal about growing and sustaining effective new teacher induction in complex settings, particularly in urban areas. Chicago Public Schools, one of our strongest partnerships, has weathered numerous leadership and budgetary changes over the past six years. In "The More Things Change... A Formula for Successful Program Leadership," former NTC colleague Amanda Perkins Walsh examines the ways induction programs can ensure sustainability in ever-changing environments. Maintaining high quality work that improves teacher practice and student learning is the best way to ensure the program remains strong. Building relationships across a system can also help make the case for continued investment in the work. NTC is fortunate to enjoy strong relationships with a dedicated set of district and state partners.

As we look to the new school year, we remember that developing the talent of teachers is complex and important work. There are no silver bullets, but one piece of the puzzle is ensuring that all teachers receive instructionally focused, differentiated support in their first years. By developing the capabilities and habits of mind of effective teaching, novices grow into excellent teachers who stay in the profession and ensure that their students receive the education they deserve. ■

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### GLESS *continued from page 3*

3. The **instructional** standards focus on classroom practice and student learning. They articulate the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions that teachers must develop.

By providing a common language to the essential components of a comprehensive teacher induction programs, these Induction Program Standards guide program development and assessment of effectiveness.

While the differences found in educational settings can make it challenging to reach a single definition for teacher induction, NTC's experiences supporting districts have helped define the necessary ingredients for programs to successfully support the growth of new teachers and the students they teach. ■

# Counting What Counts

## Measuring Impact in a Comprehensive Induction Program

By Srikanth Gopalakrishnan, NTC Chief Impact and Learning Officer

Impact measurement remains the Holy Grail by which most programs are judged, and comprehensive induction programs are no exception. Program designers and implementers must use data, not just to prove, but also improve program effectiveness. There are three main purposes for measuring impact (see Figure 1). A strong data and impact strategy serves these purposes and includes appropriate performance metrics to focus on best practices resulting in improved efficiency.

### The NTC Impact Spectrum

What data should induction programs collect? The NTC Impact Spectrum (Figure 2) provides a useful framework to answer this question. Programs need both data of implementation and impact.

Data of Implementation includes two major categories:

- 1. Counting:** Data about who is reached: students, teachers, mentors, principals, etc.
- 2. Program Quality:** This data measures to what extent the program is implemented as planned (i.e., fidelity) and how it aligns with program standards. It may include satisfaction data.

Data of Impact includes three components:

- 1. Retention:** An explicit outcome of many induction programs is to improve teacher retention. Increasingly, a key focus for many districts is not just overall retention, but *differentiated retention* of high performing teachers.
- 2. Practice:** Induction programs have the capacity to accelerate the quality of practice. These data measure the extent to which teachers (and mentors and principals) demonstrate effective practice.

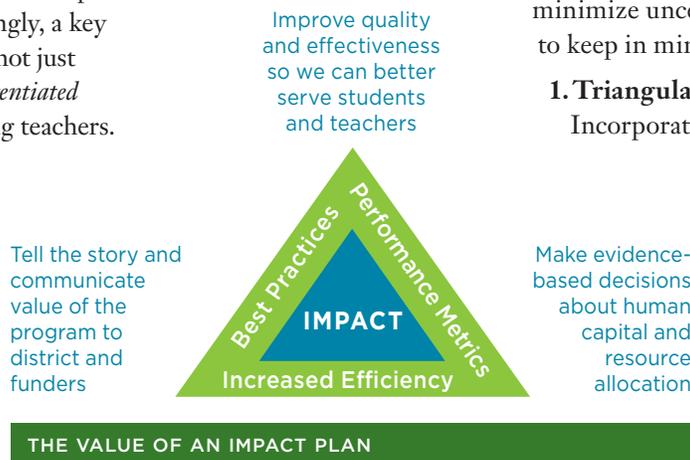


FIGURE 1: WHY MEASURE IMPACT?

- 3. Student Learning:** The ultimate outcome of a comprehensive induction program is better student learning. Hence, it is important to collect data that measure multiple dimensions of student learning—student achievement, certainly, but also student engagement, interest, and motivation.

### A Roadmap for Measurement

It is essential for comprehensive induction programs to consider impact measurement from day one. Establish systems to track implementation data, while gathering baseline data around impact measures. Comprehensive programs should not underestimate the time and resources needed. If possible, partner with the district research and evaluation unit or local universities.

Once a basic foundation is in place (and this may take most of the first year), programs can focus on deeper analysis, sharing with stakeholders, and use for decision-making. It may take a year or more for indicators such as retention and practice to improve, and potentially longer for student learning. Table 1 provides a three-year roadmap for impact measurement.

### Guidelines to Consider

Albert Einstein observed that “not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts.” Measuring impact is both an art and a science, and while we may never come close to absolute certainty, we can attempt to minimize uncertainty. A few guidelines to keep in mind:

- 1. Triangulate, Triangulate, Triangulate:** Incorporate data from multiple sources (e.g., teachers, students, mentors) using multiple methods (qualitative and quantitative). (Met Project, 2012.)

*continued on following page*

**2. Explore the “So What?” and “Now What?”:**

It is tempting to rest on our laurels once the data is gathered and analyzed. However, that just represents the “what?” piece of an adaptive action cycle, which should also include “so what does this mean?” and “what do we do about it?”

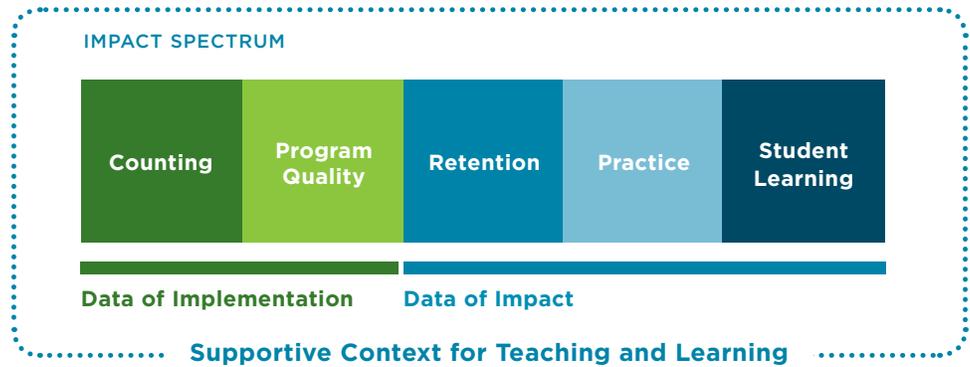


FIGURE 2: NTC IMPACT SPECTRUM

**3. Engage Stakeholders in the**

**Process:** Kurt Lewin, a pioneer in the field of group dynamics, observed that “diagnosis is not about finding the problem; it is doing so in a way that builds ownership for action” (as quoted in Weisbord, 2004). The more we engage stakeholders from the beginning to build support and ownership for data and impact, the more likely the data will be used for improvement and action.

**4. Have an Impact Plan Worked Out in Advance:**

An impact plan identifies the right data to collect, ways to collect it, and processes to analyze and reflect. (see NTC Practice Brief, 2011). While the impact plan will evolve every year based on what is learned, start a comprehensive program with a well thought-out plan that is shared with stakeholders.

As more and more districts around the country adopt a comprehensive induction model as part of an effective human capital system, it becomes imperative that impact

is threaded into these programs as integral to program strategy. Just as an effective teacher uses data to make the right instructional decisions, so can programs make evidence-based decisions that enhance impact.

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TABLE 1: A THREE-YEAR ROADMAP FOR IMPACT MEASUREMENT

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Set up systems and processes for tracking data of implementation	Go deeper with analysis	Develop robust reporting systems to share data with different stakeholders
Gather baseline data for impact measures such as retention, teacher practice, and student learning	Share data with stakeholders and use in decision-making	Connect student learning data to other impact measures and to implementation data
Form partnerships with research and evaluation experts	Start connecting impact data such as retention and practice to implementation data	Build sustainability to continue impact measurement

# Comprehensive Leadership Development

*By Mike Heffner, NTC Director of School Leadership Development and Sid Haro, NTC School Leadership Development Program Consultant*

Many of us can recall a time when the principal was seen primarily as a building manager with major responsibilities revolving around caring for the facility. As our schools have become more focused upon student learning, the principal's role has shifted to leading a school's instructional program. Principals can no longer function as building managers, following district rules, and avoiding mistakes. Today's principals have to be risk takers, leaders of learning who can develop a team delivering effective instruction. Developing and retaining talented administrators requires a comprehensive approach. For the past 12 years, New Teacher Center (NTC) has been supporting school leadership development with unwavering attention to the principal's role in supporting teacher growth.

Such a comprehensive approach includes distributed leadership structures at the schools, a well-defined pipeline, comprehensive induction, and professional development for existing leaders. The central office is responsible for both putting these pieces in place and ensuring coherence among them. Federal and state initiatives require school districts to provide job-embedded professional development, but few have been able to create the necessary cohesion from the pipeline to veteran.



A TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL AT SYLVIA CASSELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAN JOSE, CA

## The Pipeline

The next generation of school principals will require a deep understanding of teaching and learning. Many districts nationwide are seeing the candidate pool for principal openings with fewer years of teaching experience. Districts are beginning to pay greater emphasis on growing their own. A pipeline program needs to leverage the principals in the system and provide professional development to build key skills. Principals can serve as mentors and role models for site staff. Pipeline professional development must focus on time management, delegation, meeting facilitation, decision-making, and staff supervision and support.

## Induction

As candidates transition from a pipeline program to their first job as a principal, a carefully crafted induction program must be in place. NTC principal induction has three essential components:

- Targeted Leadership Coaching
- Principal Induction Academy Series
- District Leadership Development

Leadership coaching accelerates the transition into the role of principal, culture-shaper, instructional leader, and balanced manager who can maximize talent capacity and impact student learning. Coaches must be rigorously selected and provided with the professional development and support to impact principal practice.

During the first year, NTC offers a cohort-based Academy with content targeted toward transition and entry, climate and culture, supervision and feedback to teachers, supporting collaborative work, and making employment decisions. These sessions are attended and supported by leadership coaches who contextualize the concepts and resources.

Year two, the Academy's focus is on differentiated Professional Learning Communities (PLC) based upon principal interest, coach suggestion, and supervisor input. Year Two Academy PLCs develop a systems approach to school leadership, including improving student achievement and creating a data driven research and development culture.

Finally, a comprehensive induction program must support the program leader, leadership coaches and principal supervisors. Program standards, consultation, and participation in a community of other program leads all

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# Induction in Boston Public Schools

## Lessons Learned in Communication and Collaboration

By Tamika Estwick, NTC Senior Program Manager of New Teacher Development, and Victoria Hom, NTC Educational Consultant

It was the third day of the August New Teacher Institute, the culmination of months of preparation to welcome the district's newest educators. A diverse group of educators from various personal and professional experiences gathered with a unifying goal: to positively impact the lives of Boston Public Schools' students. As we looked around the room of over 300 new teachers, we recalled the steps we had taken to arrive here.

In 2006, Boston Public Schools (BPS) created and charged its Office of Professional Development's New Teacher Support System with redesigning induction. Four years later, the Office of Teacher Development and Advancement began overseeing a comprehensive induction network in the district. Today our work ranges from orienting and mentoring our first year teachers to guiding the design of professional development of all educators. We have increased our capacity and strengthened our relationships with district offices, teacher preparation, and support programs through communication and collaboration. During this journey, we have learned important lessons.

### **Mentoring and induction must be a shared responsibility.**

- The New Teacher Institute is jointly planned and facilitated by the Office of Teacher Development and Advancement, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, and external partners.
- Integral to the district's earlier efforts to facilitate the retention and growth of new teachers was the role of the New Teacher Developer (NTD). In Boston, the teacher's union contract ensures that both the district and the union will support the mentoring program model. Furthermore, since its inception, teachers, union leadership, school leaders, district administrators, and partnering organizations have been involved in every step of the recruitment and selection of NTDs.
- The Principal/Headmaster Toolkit for New Teacher Induction outlines the roles and responsibilities of school personnel in supporting first year teachers.

### **Roles and responsibilities must be transparent and clarified for all stakeholders.**

- When recruiting for NTD openings, we organize information sessions so candidates have clarity about the role before they apply.



BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS' NEW TEACHER DEVELOPERS

- Prior to the start of the school year, incoming teachers learn about the program at orientations. Separate orientations are held for Boston Teacher Residency Program graduates and Teach For America Corps members.
- In addition to the Principal/Headmaster Toolkit, we present to all principals at summer orientations.
- Beginning teachers, school leaders and New Teacher Developers must sign letters of commitment clarifying all program participants' responsibilities.

### **Effective collaboration requires flexibility.**

- BPS uses a mixed mentoring model. Schools hiring one or two new teachers stipend full-time teachers to serve as NTDs; those hiring more teachers are assigned full-release NTDs.
- The full-release NTDs are generalists, typically assigned by school to work with all new teachers. Based on feedback about the needs of Boston Teacher Residency program graduates, we align NTD assignments with content area.

### **Providing varied opportunities to connect increases awareness and strengthens relationships.**

- The induction team holds monthly meetings with program leaders from university and district teacher preparation programs as well as university and district data liaisons. In the beginning, each partner came with an agenda. We were transparent about our philosophies, needs and outcomes. As the year progressed, we used these meetings to check in on progress and celebrate

ESTWICK & HOM *continued on page 11*

# The More Things Change...

## A Formula for Successful Program Leadership

By Amanda Perkins Walsh, Chicago NTC Director, Strategy and Planning

In large urban school districts, a constant is change. Sustaining any program can be challenging. In Chicago, NTC has scaled up its comprehensive teacher induction program, scaled it down, added principal induction, and begun to scale up teacher induction again without compromising quality.

While this is not ideal, we have navigated it with success and are currently working with the district to create a long-term plan for supporting every new teacher.

This kind of change within and around a program is not unique to Chicago. Given the pace at which schools and districts change, this probably looks more familiar than you wish. Program leaders, district administrators, and mentors should expect change, prepare for it, learn from it and not allow it to paralyze. Over the past six years working with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) we learned the key to navigating change: Make the case, do great work and keep it relevant.

### Making the Case and Doing Great Work

Delivering an excellent program where mentors, teachers and their students are getting better every day is the fundamental job of the teacher induction program leader.

Having structures in place to ensure that your program is producing desired results is a critical success factor; it's hard to make the case for work that's just "okay." Maybe you've had an informal mentoring expand. Stop and ask: "Who are the decision-makers in my context? Who are the critical stakeholders I'll need standing with me as I advocate for a more comprehensive approach? And what story must I tell in order to make the case to them?"

You'll get your highest leverage from a case that articulates induction as integral to the district's teacher effectiveness and development plan, when it responds to a local issue like teacher attrition, and when other people—principals, teachers themselves, your philanthropic partners or union partners—advocate for the investment.

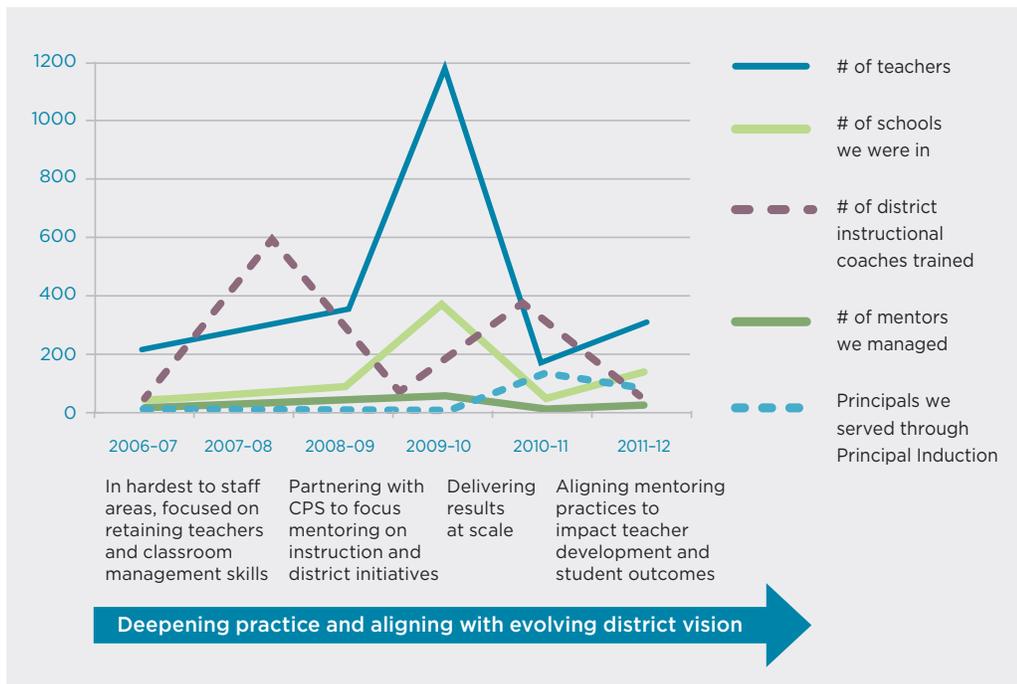
During a recent time of budget belt-tightening, CPS had to decide the amount of funds to allocate to teacher induction and whom to serve. When a high level decision-maker suggested increasing mentor case loads, our partners cited research substantiating that this would produce a significantly less return on the investment. When you can get results like this without being present, you have clearly made your case.

For those working in a setting where the value of comprehensive teacher induction is already understood, making the case is slightly different. You should frequently meet with your stakeholders to assess their perception of the program's value. In every budget season, be ready to help others see what an invaluable investment this is. One way to do so is by having a solid impact plan and sharing the results in staff meetings, one-on-one with the superintendent, or quarterly updates to funders.

### Keeping it Relevant

If your experience is like NTC's in Chicago, you'll need to be sure the program balances: providing the

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The New Teacher Center was brought in to work with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in 2006—under Arne Duncan’s leadership as Chief Executive Officer of CPS—to turn the tide of chronically low student achievement. The nation’s third largest district was losing three or four out of every five new teachers, and its leaders knew low student outcomes were related to high teacher turnover.

NTC’s partnership with CPS includes a new teacher induction program and a new principal induction program. This work is integrated into the district’s Human Capital Management strategy, the district’s comprehensive approach to recruiting, supporting and evaluating educators and administrators.

highest quality program, relevance to teachers’ actual needs, and responsiveness to the local context and constraints. Designing and sustaining a program that answers all of these demands requires that you collaborate with stakeholders at every level and work across functions that often operate in their own silos. Over the past several years in Chicago, we have worked closely with our CPS partners to ensure that our teacher and principal induction programs integrate with the vision of both human resources *and* the teaching and learning functions. This takes work and time—you have to be at the right tables adding value as a thought partner if you want to help others to see your program as integral to school and district success.

Once you’ve done the upfront work, you’ll need to keep your finger on the pulse of program implementation. Are you delivering the program you intended, and is it getting the results you anticipated? Are teachers and mentors getting better every day? How do you know? Do principals agree?

Even so, you can always find yourself facing a new challenge. The district is making some tough decisions, and your program will be losing a full-time position. Or, the district is reorganizing and the program will be situated differently. Whatever the case, a program leader’s job is to understand the changes, know the non-negotiables and insist on delivering a high-quality program. *Promising Strategies for Improving Mentor Program Outcomes* is a useful NTC resource for this.

Keeping your program strong and relevant and talking about your successes in a way that builds advocates—teachers, principals, mentors, district leaders—will go a long way to making it integral and thus, sustainable. ■

HEFFNER & HARO *continued from page 8*

serve to support leadership. Coach supervisors are guided by coaching standards and expectations as well as supervision and development practices. Principal supervisors are engaged in the induction program and play a critical role as they ultimately set the expectations for principals. NTC work with principal supervisors seeks to shift from managing schools to developing instructional leaders.

### Professional Development for All

While the pipeline and induction work is essential for building the capacity of future and new principals, experienced principals need the support for success in a changing profession. For many principals the role and the schools they began with look vastly different from what it once was. Our experienced principals require support as teacher evaluation systems are becoming more meaningful and relevant. Experienced principals face a significant challenge to adapt existing evaluation practices to developing their teachers through targeted feedback and encouraging improvement. ■

ESTWICK & HOM *continued from page 9*

- successes. Between meetings, we used an online forum to share minutes, documents, and project assignments.
- Our principal breakfasts have evolved into NTD-facilitated, school-based principal and beginning teacher meetings.
  - At district-mandated meetings, we display FAS tools, data, and testimonials about successes to complement in-person discussions with principals.

### It is important to communicate about our successes.

In 2009, we co-authored a report with the Boston Plan for Excellence, *Hiring and Keeping Urban Teachers: A Coordinated Approach to New Teacher Induction*, that was shared with the district leadership team, the Boston School Committee, and external district partners to raise awareness of the program’s achievements. We have also presented to the Boston School Committee, the Boston Teachers Union and the Boston City Council about the value of induction in order to cultivate support.

There is much more to do. We must further deepen our relationships with our partners; share our past year’s data and set goals for the upcoming year; make a bigger effort to involve our partners in district events; and provide more informal forums for NTDs and other Induction Coaches to meet. We have learned how vital it is to communicate our vision, goals, and successes. ■



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**We wish to thank the following organizations  
for their support of the New Teacher Center:**

Agilent Technologies Foundation  
The AVI CHAI Foundation  
Applied Materials Foundation  
Barnet Segal Charitable Trust  
BelleJAR Foundation  
The Birenbaum Family Fund  
California Community Foundation  
Carnegie Corporation of New York  
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation  
Chizen Family Foundation  
Sender and Tali Cohen  
The Carol & James Collins Foundation  
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Janet Gless, *NTC Chief Officer, Programs and Partnerships*  
Anne Watkins, *Editor*  
Felton Ward Design, *Design and Production*

Printed by Community Printers, Santa Cruz, CA

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**About New Teacher Center**

New Teacher Center focuses on improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers. NTC partners with states, school districts, and policymakers to implement programs that create sustainable, high-quality mentoring and professional development; build leadership capacity; work to enhance teaching conditions; improve retention; and transform schools into vibrant learning communities where all students succeed.





For the Success of Each Learner

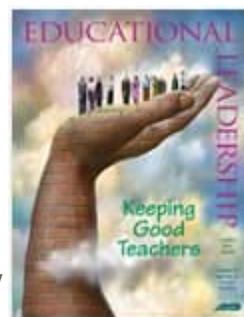
# Educational Leadership

May 2003 | Volume 60 | Number 8  
**Keeping Good Teachers** Pages 25-29

## What New Teachers Need to Learn

*Sharon Feiman-Nemser*

**Addressing the learning needs of new teachers can improve both the rate of teacher retention and the quality of the teaching profession.**



May 2003

A brochure advertising a summer institute on mentoring new teachers features a well-dressed teacher standing at the chalkboard. The text reads,

She has been teaching for three years. Her students really like her. She's dedicated. She's energetic. She's creative. . . . She's quitting. (Michigan Education Association, 2000)

The message inside the brochure is clear: If this third-year teacher had had a well-trained mentor, she would still be teaching.

The brochure illustrates an emerging consensus among U.S. educators and policymakers that the retention of new teachers depends on effective mentors and induction programs. More states are mandating induction programs than ever before, and many urban districts offer some kind of support to beginning teachers, usually in the form of mentoring.

Still, the overall picture is uneven. Most policy mandates lack an understanding of the learning needs of beginning teachers and of the resources required to create effective programs. Too often, induction programs offer only short-term support to help new teachers survive their first year on the job.

These induction programs generally aim to increase retention by providing emotional support to new teachers. Although this goal is important, it stops short of realizing what powerful induction programs can accomplish. Keeping new teachers in teaching is not the same as helping them become good teachers. To accomplish the latter, we must treat the first years of teaching as a phase in learning to teach and surround new teachers with a professional culture that supports teacher learning.

## Learning to Teach

The early years of teaching are a special time in a teacher's career, different from what has gone before and what comes after. No longer student teachers in someone else's classroom, beginning teachers are on their own, faced with the same responsibilities as their experienced colleagues.

Beginning teachers get hired, often late, and arrive a week before school starts for the year to set up their classrooms and prepare for students. Everything is new: where to put the desks, what to do on the first day and every day after that; who the students are; what their families are like; and what interests, resources, and backgrounds students bring to the classroom. For the novice,

the questions are unending: What am I supposed to teach? How will my students be tested? What will their test scores say about me as a teacher? What does the principal expect? Am I supposed to keep my students quiet, or do my colleagues understand that engaged learning sometimes means messy classrooms and active students? And after the first weeks of school, how can I find out what my students really know, deal with their diverse learning needs, and ensure that everyone is learning?

These questions represent a major learning agenda. They embrace issues of curriculum, instruction, assessment, management, school culture, and the larger community. They go well beyond maintaining order, which most perceive as the primary concern of beginning teachers.

Before novices begin teaching, they go through an initial phase of learning. In a preservice program, they can acquire subject-matter knowledge, study the learning process and students' cultural backgrounds, and acquire a beginning repertoire of approaches to planning, instruction, and assessment. But we misrepresent the process of learning to teach when we consider new teachers as finished products, when we assume that they mostly need to refine existing skills, or when we treat their learning needs as signs of deficiency in their preparation. Beginning teachers have legitimate learning needs that cannot be grasped in advance or outside the contexts of teaching.

What exactly do new teachers need to learn that they could not have learned before they began teaching? In the New Teacher Induction Study, an examination of three well-regarded induction programs in the United States, we asked mentors, principals, and new teachers to reflect on this question. Their responses reflect the special learning needs of beginning teachers (Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Katz, & Schwille, 1999; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993).<sup>1</sup>

## The Learning Curve

New teachers need to learn situationally relevant approaches to their subject matter. As one teacher remarked,

I need to learn to teach subject matter in a way that students are going to get it, not necessarily the way the teacher's manual says to do it.

Standards documents also offer new challenges. One mentor called the district's curriculum standards "a thick foreign language book" that had to be interpreted before beginning teachers could learn to integrate standards into their teaching and not treat standards and teaching as separate tasks.

Each new teacher's learning agenda is also intimately bound up with the personal struggle to craft a public identity. As Featherstone (1993) points out,

The new teacher is constantly on stage and urgently needs to develop a performing self with whom he or she can live comfortably. (p. 101)

One principal explained that new teachers' understanding of performance needed to include "the nitty-gritty things like transitions and momentum."

New teachers need to learn how to think on their feet, size up situations and decide what to do, study the effects of their practice, and use what they learn to inform their planning and teaching (Ball & Cohen, 1999). New teachers also have to learn to teach in a particular context. For example, one mentor in our study commented,

Most of our teachers come to the district having little or no concept of what it means to live and be in an urban situation.

With such a large learning agenda, is it any wonder that these early years of teaching represent a period of survival and intense discovery, when the learning curve is steep and emotions run high?

By most accounts, new teachers need three or four years to achieve competence and several

more to reach proficiency. If we leave beginning teachers to sink or swim on their own, they may become overwhelmed and leave the field. Alternatively, they may stay, clinging to practices and attitudes that help them survive but do not serve the education needs of students. A high-quality induction program should increase the probability that new teachers learn desirable lessons from their early teaching experiences.

To take new teachers seriously as learners, we must not give them the same responsibilities as veteran teachers or assign them the most difficult classes. With new teacher learning as our goal, induction becomes an educational intervention that addresses new teachers' learning needs while helping them develop a principled teaching practice.

## A Process of Enculturation

In addition to being novices to the practice of teaching, new teachers are also newcomers to a particular school community. What kind of organization and culture are new teachers being inducted into?

The induction literature reflects a strong emphasis on adjustment (Griffin, 1987). Phrases like "learning the ropes" and "eased entry" suggest that induction is about helping new teachers fit into the existing system. Even if we object to the passivity of the new teacher that such formulations imply, we still need to think about who is "teaching the ropes" and what they are teaching. What implicit and explicit messages do new teachers receive about teaching in this school and district? How do interactions with colleagues, supervisors, and students strengthen or weaken new teachers' disposition toward students' learning and the new teachers' motivation to continue developing as teachers? Whether the early years of teaching are a time of constructive learning or a period of coping, adjustment, and survival depends largely on the working conditions and culture of teaching that new teachers encounter.

The story of beginning teaching usually revolves around several themes: reality shock, the lonely struggle to survive, and a loss of idealism. Eddy (1969) portrays some of these themes in an early study of new teachers in poor urban schools. She describes how new teachers face difficulties and turn to veteran teachers for advice:

The solutions offered by the old-timers stress the importance of keeping pupils quietly occupied and forcing them to respond to the activities of the teacher, even if several days, weeks, or months are required to drill them in routines of acting out their subordinate role in the classroom. (p. 18)

When the situations do not improve, new teachers may find some comfort in ascribing their difficulties to traits in pupils or parents or in blaming the administration. Finding support for those views in older colleagues allows new teachers to "maintain a professional identity even when they fail to teach pupils in ways that enable them to achieve" (p. 118). Thus, Eddy concludes, experienced teachers indoctrinate new teachers with attitudes, behaviors, and values that they have defined as appropriate for teachers working in an education bureaucracy.

Painful to read, this study underscores the influential role of colleagues in shaping new teachers' professional stance and practice. As new teachers try to make sense of what is going on in their classrooms, the explanations and advice they encounter, especially from more experienced colleagues, affect their attitudes. Unfortunately, the models and messages available to the new teachers in Eddy's study only served to perpetuate the systemic inequities that still plague education.

Imagine this different induction scenario, based on data from the New Teacher Induction Study.<sup>2</sup> Fern is a beginning teacher in an urban elementary school that faces restructuring because of consistently low performance and administrative troubles. A districtwide initiative has reorganized schools into grade-level teams. Guided by lead teachers, teams are responsible for selecting instructional materials and learning activities, tracking each child's progress, keeping parents

informed, and working with students until they meet that level's exit standards.

Although the teacher community is close-knit, the school is not an easy place to begin teaching. First, the redesign process is stressful and uncertain. Second, Fern is anxious about her classroom management skills and believes that her students' behavior is out of control.

Although her official mentor offers material resources for her curriculum and affective support to bolster her confidence, Fern's management difficulties undermine her sense of effectiveness. Fortunately, she receives direct help from a colleague. During an evaluation conference for a special education student, the speech teacher assigned to Fern's grade-level team notices her stress and offers to help. Several times a week, she comes to Fern's classroom, where she works directly with students who are having difficulty and quietly intervenes when student behavior is too disruptive. While Fern focuses on instruction, the speech teacher helps her maintain order by intervening with individual students as needed.

Fern credits the intervention, which continues for about six weeks, with effecting a marked improvement in her students' behavior. Eventually, the speech teacher stops coming on a regular basis, but the assistance has had a positive effect on both Fern and her students. As the year progresses, Fern feels comfortable seeking assistance from other teachers on her team, especially a veteran 3rd grade colleague who shares valuable experience about working with parents. With her team members' ideas about management and instruction, Fern feels less in survival mode and more able to concentrate on instruction.

Historically, schools have not been set up to support the learning of teachers, novice or veteran (Sarason, 1990). The typical organization, which Little (1999) refers to as "individual classrooms connected by a common parking lot" (p. 256), keeps teachers separated from one another, reinforcing their isolation and sense of autonomy. Without easy access to one another, teachers may feel reluctant to share problems or ask for help, believing that good teachers figure things out on their own. Even if teachers do get together, they may not know how to engage in productive talk about teaching and learning. Often concerns for comfort and harmony lead teachers to minimize differences in philosophy or practice and avoid asking for evidence or offering an alternative perspective.

Clearly, schools vary in their openness to innovation and experimentation, their capacity for collaboration around curriculum development and student assessment, and their commitment to shared standards and critical conversation.

We cannot assume that grade-level teams or other school structures automatically provide a forum for addressing new teachers' learning needs. Without the school's explicit endorsement of induction as a shared responsibility and a professional culture that supports collaboration and problem solving, new teachers may still find themselves alone with their questions and problems. Nor can we assume that assigned mentors have the time and the expertise to help novices improve their teaching and their students' learning, or that mentoring can make up for inappropriate teaching assignments. When staffing needs and teacher contracts work against appropriate and responsible placements for beginning teachers, induction support is at best a band-aid.

If, on the other hand, schools make assignments that fit new teachers' backgrounds and interests, provide easy access to resources and practical expertise, and offer regular opportunities for substantive talk about teaching and learning, then new teachers will feel supported by a professional community where all teachers are learners.

## Quality Induction

New teachers long for opportunities to learn from their experienced colleagues and want more than social support and instructions for using the copying machine. New teachers want to discuss curriculum implementation, get ideas about how to address specific students' needs, and gain

insight from colleagues with experience in their subject areas (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). Providing emotional support is not as valuable as helping new teachers learn to create safe classroom environments, engage all students in worthwhile learning, work effectively with parents, and base instructional decisions on assessment data.

## **Mentoring**

The goal of new teacher learning should define the mentor's role and practice. Mentors often offer help only if the new teacher asks; they don't think of new teachers as learners and themselves as their teachers. When learning to teach is the goal, however, mentors become teachers of teaching, not buddies or local guides.

In many ways, mentoring is an unnatural activity for teachers. Good classroom teachers are effective because they can pull off a seamless performance, monitor student understanding, and engage students in important ideas. But good classroom teachers may not know how to make their thinking visible, explain the principles behind their practice, or break down complex teaching moves into components understandable to a beginner. Nor do they necessarily know how to design an individualized curriculum for learning to teach that is tailored to the specific strengths and vulnerabilities of a particular novice in a specific context.

Serious mentoring oriented around new teacher learning is a professional practice that can be learned. Strong induction programs offer mentors more than a few days of initial training. They provide ongoing opportunities for study and problem solving as mentors carry out their work with new teachers. To learn to mentor in educative ways, mentor teachers need opportunities to clarify their vision of good teaching, to see and analyze effective models of mentoring, to develop skills in observing and talking about teaching in analytic, nonjudgmental ways, and to learn to assess new teachers' progress and their own effectiveness as mentors.

By taking the professional development of mentor teachers seriously, induction programs increase experienced teachers' capacity for critical conversation and joint work, key elements in the creation of authentic professional learning communities. The investment in mentor teacher development also means that induction programs help renew and retain experienced teachers by casting them in new roles as school-based teacher educators.

## **Using Standards**

Because national and state standards reflect visions of good teaching, they can serve to shape conversations about instruction. When we help new teachers assess their progress toward standards, we induct them into professional habits of inquiry and norms of accountability. In the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project, for example, mentors help new teachers identify areas of strength and areas of needed growth using a self-assessment tool (New Teacher Center, 2002) linked to the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. Early in their first year of teaching, new teachers create an individual learning plan that identifies particular development activities designed to improve the new teacher's knowledge and skills. Across the two years of the induction program, regular formative assessments provide the mentors and new teachers with useful data in determining how new teachers are doing, what they need to work on, and how much progress they are making.

## **The Challenges**

Understanding induction as an enculturation process means recognizing that working conditions and school culture powerfully influence the character, quality, and outcome of new teachers' early years on the job. Even the best induction programs cannot compensate for an unhealthy school climate, a competitive teacher culture, or an inappropriate teaching assignment.

If we take seriously the influential role of school organization and culture on new teachers' stance toward students and on their teaching ideology and practice, we ensure that beginning teachers

have easy access to appropriate resources, on-site guidance and coaching, and regular opportunities to work on problems of teaching and learning with experienced, committed teachers.

And if we take teaching seriously as the learning profession, we will foster new teacher learning in a strong professional culture that promotes teacher learning across all experience levels. When we meet their learning needs, new teachers can reach their full potential—not only by staying in the profession but also by improving learning for all students.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The New Teacher Induction Study was sponsored by the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching with funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, and by the Walter S. Johnson Foundation.
- <sup>2</sup> Daniel Katz constructed this scenario.

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