TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM

2013-2014

NAZARETH AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
One Education Plaza
Nazareth, PA 18064

Mentor Handbook
**Goals of the NASD Teacher Induction Program (TIP)**

The goals of the Nazareth Area School District Teacher Induction Program (TIP) are to provide each inductee with a general orientation to the Nazareth Area School District and to increase his/her knowledge and improve his/her teaching skills.

The objectives of the program are to:

a. Familiarize the inductee with school district policies and practices and to integrate them into the social system of the school and community.

b. To provide an opportunity for the inductee to analyze and reflect on their teaching with coaching from veteran teachers.

c. To support the development of the inductee’s professional knowledge and skills.

d. To provide continued assistance to face the challenges of the new teacher.

e. To cultivate a professional attitude toward teaching and learning, and working with others such as students, parents and colleagues.

The general topics to be covered in our TIP can be classified into two categories:

a. Those designed as orientation activities to familiarize the inductee with the Nazareth Area School District.

b. Those activities designed to develop and define the professional knowledge and skills of the inductee.

An orientation program will be presented by district staff prior to the beginning of each school year in August. A similar type program will be presented to any newly-hired inductee throughout the school year by the chairperson of the TIP program to insure the continuity of the program. Some of the topics that will familiarize inductees with the Nazareth Area School District will include:

- The Framework for Teaching
- District calendar
- Salary and benefits
- PA Public School Code and district’s policy book
- Courses of study and curriculum
- Emergency closings
- Hiring a substitute teacher
- HIPPA, FERPA
- Technology and AUP
- Homework policy
- Bell schedules
- School handbooks
- Lesson plans and plan books
- First day routines
- Grouping of students
- Supplies
- Grading procedures
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Act 48, Instructional I, Instructional II, Tenure
A packet of materials to be part of the orientation program should include but may not be limited to:

- PDE Form 82-1
- PDE Form 426, 427, or 428
- Copy of TIP Inductee Handbook
- Professional development plan
- District calendar
- Course of study
- Guidelines for duplicating
- School closing procedure
- Hiring a substitute
- Homework policy
- School handbook
- District policies
- Human Resources forms
- Business Office forms
- Technology passwords

General activities designed to develop and refine the professional knowledge and skills of the inductees are presented by district staff at the orientation session in August and throughout the year. The orientation session will include presentations on classroom management, student exceptionalities and referrals, observation and evaluation of professional personnel, and current issues in education. Ongoing activities throughout the year will focus on any other activities deemed appropriate to familiarize the inductees with the Nazareth Area School District. In addition to the activities designed specifically for the inductees, each inductee will participate in the district’s professional development plan and reflect on growth through the development of a professional portfolio.

The Nazareth Area School District will provide the following assistance to inductees involved in the TIP:

a. A minimum of $125.00 per inductee for off-site workshops/conferences plus the transportation costs and required substitute days.

b. Release time for a minimum of two full-day peer observation opportunities (at least one in district) with the approval of the building administrator and to be completed by the end of January.
### Timeline of Activities/Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity / Requirement</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District/Building Orientation Sessions</td>
<td>August 13-15, 2013</td>
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<td>Topics in Student Services</td>
<td>September 18, 2013</td>
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<td>September Teacher Induction Report Due</td>
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<td>Parent Conferences Worksession</td>
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<td>December Teacher Induction Report Due</td>
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<td>Professional Portfolios Mid-Year Check Worksession</td>
<td>January 29, 2013</td>
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<td>January 31, 2014</td>
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<td>January Teacher Induction Report Due</td>
<td>January 31, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q &amp; A: Human Resources, Policies and Benefits</td>
<td>February 26, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>February Teacher Induction Report Due</td>
<td>February 28, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q &amp; A:  Professional Portfolios</td>
<td>March 26, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>March Teacher Induction Report Due</td>
<td>March 31, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion of Off-Site Workshop or Conference</td>
<td>April 30, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>April Monthly Teacher Induction Report Due (include with Portfolio)</td>
<td>April 30, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Portfolios Due</td>
<td>April 30, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion of NASD Professional Development Requirements</td>
<td>May 1, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of TIP</td>
<td>May 7, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIP Reception/Board Recognition</td>
<td>May 12, 2014</td>
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Requirements of TIP

- Weekly meetings of Inductee/Mentor (September through January)
- Bi-monthly meetings of Inductee/Mentor (February through May)
- Two peer classroom observations (By January 31, 2014)
- Attend an offsite conference or workshop (By April 30, 2014)
- Completion of Needs Assessment for Teacher Inductees (Addendum #1)
- Completion of Checklist of Induction Discussions (Addendum #2)
- Completion of Monthly Teacher Induction Reports (Addendum #3)
- Completion of Induction Completion Document (Addendum #4)
- Completion of the Evaluation of TIP Document (Addendum #5)
- Completion of Professional Portfolio (Addendum #6)

*To verify participation in the TIP, a copy of the Checklist of Induction Discussions document together with a copy of the Induction Completion Document will be placed in each inductee’s permanent file in the Superintendent’s office. The original Induction Completion Document along with a Certificate of Completion will be given to each inductee for their records.

Required Documents

The following pages lists the required documents required for the Teacher Induction Program. Copies of these documents will be placed in the district share folder > professional development > teacher induction program.
NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR TEACHER INDUCTEES

Inductee___________________________  Mentor___________________________

Building____________________________  Date_____________________________

Some typical components of the Framework of Teaching are listed below. Please circle three specific items from each of the Four Domains of Teaching. The circled items should be addressed by you and your Mentor during the 2013-2014 school year.

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation
1. Individual Differences
2. Lesson Plans
3. Materials Acquisitions
4. Special Education
5. Pupil Support Services
6. IU Resources
7. Pupil Grading
8. Portfolio Assessment
9. Other

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment
1. Classroom Management
2. Discipline
3. School Facilities
4. School Procedures (Classroom and Non-Classroom)
5. Custodial / Clerical Relations
6. Nurse/First Aid
7. CPR/AED
8. Other

Domain 3: Instruction
1. Meeting the Nazareth Area School District Benchmarks for the PA Academic Standards
2. Curriculum Mapping
3. Courses of Study
4. Integrated Language Arts Program
5. Instructional Delivery Models (Teaching Strategies)
6. Communicating clearly and accurately
7. Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness
8. Other

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities
1. Professionalism
2. Record keeping/Reporting
3. School Philosophy
4. Public Relations
5. Teacher Evaluation
6. Parent/Teacher Relationships
7. Parent Conferences
8. School Policy/Procedures
9. School Handbook/s
10. Summer Programs
11. Budget
12. Contributing to the School and District
13. Other

Please list additional instructional or orientation needs that you might have below. Feel free to use the back of the page.
ADDENDUM #2

CHECKLIST OF INDUCTION DISCUSSIONS
(To be completed by the Mentor- Due with Professional Portfolio)

Inductee___________________________ Mentor___________________________
Building____________________________ Date_____________________________

*Topics preceded by the mentor’s initials indicate* the areas addressed by the above Inductee and Mentor during the 2013-2014 school year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 1: Planning and Preparation</th>
<th>Domain 2: The Classroom Environment</th>
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<td>_____ 1. Classroom Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ 2. Lesson Plans</td>
<td>_____ 2. Discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ 4. Special Education</td>
<td>_____ 4. School Procedures (Classroom and Non-Classroom)</td>
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<td>_____ 5. Pupil Support Services</td>
<td>_____ 5. Custodial / Clerical Relations</td>
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<td>_____ 6. IU Resources</td>
<td>_____ 6. Nurse/First Aid</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ 7. Pupil Grading</td>
<td>_____ 7. CPR/AED</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ 8. Portfolio Assessment</td>
<td>_____ 8. Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ 9. Other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Domain 3: Instruction             | Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities |
| Initials:                         | Initials:                               |
| _____ 1. Meeting the NASD         | _____ 1. Professionalism               |
| District Benchmarks for the PA    | _____ 2. Record keeping/Reporting      |
| Academic Standards                | _____ 3. School Philosophy             |
| _____ 3. Courses of Study         | _____ 5. Teacher Evaluation            |
| _____ 4. Integrated Lang Arts Program | _____ 6. Parent/Teacher Relationships |
| (Teaching Strategies)             | _____ 7. Parent Conferences            |
| _____ 6. Communicating clearly and accurately | _____ 8. School Policy/Procedures |
| _____ 8. Other                    | _____ 10. Summer Programs              |

NASD MENTOR HANDBOOK page 7
MONTHLY TEACHER INDUCTION REPORT

Mentor ___________________________  Inductee ___________________________

Building ___________________________  Month ___________________________

Topic(s) Discussed
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Action(s) Planned
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Principal’s Signature ___________________________  Date ___________________________

Comments:________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
ADDENDUM #4

Nazareth Area School District

INDUCTION COMPLETION DOCUMENT
(To be completed by the Mentor- Due with Professional Portfolio)

Mentor ___________________________________ Inductee ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Dates of Participation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. District Orientation Session</td>
<td>_______________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Topics in Student Services</td>
<td>_______________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. Conferencing with Parents Workshop</td>
<td>_______________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. Special Topics in Curriculum and Instruction</td>
<td>_______________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>V. Professional Portfolios Mid-Year Workshop</td>
<td>_______________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>VI. Evaluation of TIP Meeting</td>
<td>_______________________</td>
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VI. Monthly Report to Principals/Assistant Superintendent

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<tr>
<th>Sep____</th>
<th>Oct____</th>
<th>Nov____</th>
<th>Dec____</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan____</td>
<td>Feb____</td>
<td>Mar ____</td>
<td>Apr____</td>
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VII. Peer Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2.</td>
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VIII. Off-Site Workshop/Conference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
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IX. Professional Portfolio Submitted

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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This certifies that the above named inductee participated in and successfully completed the requirements of the Teacher Induction Program during the 2013-2014 school year.

__________________________________________
Superintendent’s Signature

__________________________________________
Mentor’s Signature

___________________  _________________
Date                  Date
EVALUATION OF PROGRAM
(To be filled out by inductee)

1. Did this program provide the support that you needed to make the transition to the Nazareth Area School District? Explain.

2. What things would you suggest be added to aid an incoming teacher?

3. What changes in the program would you recommend?

4. To what extent were the following objectives met by the program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>* Improvement of teaching skills</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Adjustment to district and building standards and methods of operation</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Adjustment to student needs</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Assessment of professional development</td>
<td>_____</td>
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</table>

____________________________________  __________________________
Inductee’s Signature                  Date
Nazareth Area School District

Teacher Portfolio

________________________________________________
Teacher

________________________________________________
School

“The objective is not to create outstanding portfolios, but to cultivate outstanding teaching and learning.”

-Kenneth Wolf, University of Colorado at Denver
Professional Portfolios

One of the greatest skills of an educator is reflection. Being able to reflect upon one’s practice and grow from the reflection is the demonstration of professionalism to the highest caliber and indicative of a life-long learner. The creation of a professional portfolio at a time of transition (either to a new district or to a new profession) provides one the opportunity to not only reflect upon practice, but to set goals and collect evidence around the goals selected. It offers the chance to celebrate success and to contemplate the question “what would I do differently if I had to do it all over again.” Teachers encourage students to select examples of their work over time to demonstrate how much they've learned, and should do the same. "Portfolios have much to offer the teaching profession," writes Dr. Kenneth Wolf, of the University of Colorado. "When teachers carefully examine their own practices, those practices are likely to improve. The examples of accomplished practice that portfolios provide also can be studied and adapted for use in other classrooms."

Requirements of the Professional Portfolio for Induction

As part of the Nazareth Area School District Teacher Induction Program (TIP), each inductee will create a professional portfolio to be submitted by April 30, 2014. The portfolio should include the following:

1) Selection of a District or Building Goal
   i. Action plan based on the selected goal (focused on the Framework for Teaching)
   ii. Evidence of the actions taken

2) Selection of Teacher Goal
   i. Action plan based on the selected goal (focused on the Framework for Teaching)
   ii. Evidence of the actions taken

3) Selection of a Learner Goal
   i. Action plan based on the selected goal (focused on the Framework for Teaching)
   ii. Evidence of the actions taken

4) Mid-Year Reflection
   i. Reflection on progress toward meeting goals
   ii. Discussion with Mentor concerning progress

5) End-of-Year Reflection
   i. Reflection on action plans taken to reach goals
   ii. Review/Discussion with Principal

The forms on the following pages will assist in the creation of the professional portfolio.
NASD Professional Portfolio Guide

**District/ Building Goal:**
Select a goal from the Educational Program Department or from building goals shared by your principal. These are “big picture” goals that will contribute to your growth within your building/the district.

**Action Plan for Achieving Goal:**
List the actions you took to achieve the goal(s).
An action plan should be like a lesson plan, highlighting the steps/actions you intend to take in order to achieve the goal selected, Questions to consider include: What are the specific tasks you plan to do to meet your goal(s)? How will you incorporate the key components of the goal in your teaching? What changes do you plan to make in your instruction to incorporate the goal? What will change for your students, parents, and colleagues? You can add to the list as you progress through the year.

**Domains/Components/Elements from The Framework for Teaching:**
Identify the domains/components/elements that attach to the actions you plan to take. Use the Components of Professional Practice for guidance in planning your actions.

**Professional Development:**
What types of professional development did you pursue in order to meet the district/building goal you have selected?

**Evidence Collected:**
Collect examples of evidence that indicate you have met or are working toward your goal(s). This needs to be a purposeful collection of evidence. You do not need to include every test, worksheet, or piece of student work! Choose items that you are particularly proud of, items that exhibit growth, items which may need revision, etc. Pictures, communications, etc. may also be collected.
Teacher Goal:

2. Based on the results of the self-assessment, select a goal in an area in which you would like to grow this year.

Action Plan for Achieving Goal:

List the actions you took to achieve the goal(s).

Domains/Components/Elements from The Framework for Teaching:

Professional Development:

What types of professional development did you pursue in order to meet your teacher goal?

Evidence Collected:
Learner Goal:

Select a goal that incorporates evidence of how you have directly solved a specific learning problem by improving a particular student(s) deficit.

Action Plan for Achieving Goal:

List the actions you took to achieve the goal(s).

Domains/Components/Elements from *The Framework for Teaching*:

Professional Development:

What type of professional development did you pursue in order to meet your learner goal?

Evidence Collected:
Mid-Year Progress Mentor/Inductee Discussion:

1. What is working in your portfolio development process and achievement of your goals?

2. Where are you having difficulty?

3. How can you access the assistance/support needed?
Inductee Year-End Reflection

District or Building Goal:
1. Assuming I have achieved in meeting or working toward the district or building goal, what impact has this had on student learning in my classroom? How has student success been measured?

2. What impact has meeting or working toward the district or building goal had on me as a teaching professional?

3. What, if any, adaptations or modifications need to be made for next year?

4. What are my professional development needs?

Teacher Goal:
1. Assuming I have achieved in meeting or working toward the teacher goal, what impact has this had on student learning in my classroom?

2. What impact has meeting or working toward the teacher goal have on me as a teaching professional?

3. What, if any, adaptations or modifications need to be made for next year?

4. What are my professional development needs?
**Inductee Year-End Reflection (continued)**

**Learner Goal:**
1. Assuming I have achieved in meeting or working toward the learner goal, what impact has this had on student learning in my classroom?

2. What impact has meeting or working toward the learner goal had on me as a teaching professional?

3. What, if any, adaptations or modifications need to be made for next year?

4. What are my professional development needs?
Teacher Portfolio End-of-the-Year Review

Principal's Comments:

Teacher's Response:

Principal Signature ____________________________  Teacher Signature ____________________________
# Professional Portfolio Year-End Evaluation

Teacher’s Name ___________________________ Building ____________

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<td>Framework for Teaching connection</td>
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**COMMENTS:**

Assistant Superintendent ___________________________ Date ___________________________
The mentor-inductee relationship is essential to the success of a new teacher as he or she enters the education profession in the Nazareth Area School District. The formal and informal activities associated with a successful induction program are based upon the positive relationship built between experienced and novice teachers. The following guidelines are established to assist the mentor in addressing the needs and concerns of the inductee:

1) Participate in assigned activities during the NASD Teacher Induction Program
2) Meet at least once a week during the months of September through January
3) Meet at least once every other week from February through May
4) Provide guidance and assistance at all transition points throughout the year (ie: beginning of school year; end of marking periods/semesters; before and after breaks)
5) Ensure that all aspects and documentation of the induction process have been completed and submitted to the Assistant Superintendent’s Office (Attention: Leah Recker) by established deadlines.
6) Ensure that the final Induction Completion Document and the inductee’s professional portfolio is submitted no later than April 30, 2014 to the Assistant Superintendent’s Office (Attention: Leah Recker).

Qualities of a Successful Mentor:

1) Sensitive to the needs of the beginning teacher
2) Knowledgeable of PA Academic Standards
3) Active Listener
4) Maintains professional confidentiality
5) Non-judgmental
6) Provides support and guidance
7) Assists with problem-solving
8) Collaborative and reflective
9) Proven record of applying instructional best practices
New Teacher Appreciation Ideas

- Thanks for adding "joy" to a child's life! (Almond Joy)
- Thanks for putting your "heart" into teaching!
- You add "pop" to our district! (Popsecret popcorn)
- We are "nuts" about you!
- It's a real "treat" working with you! (Reese's treat)
- You're a real slugger! Keep batting for children! (Babe Ruth)
- We didn't know "werther" or not you realize how special you are to us! (Werther's Original)
- Thanks for your whopper ideas! (Whoppers)
- You're the "prize" in our district! (Cracker Jacks)
- You're worth your weight in chocolate! (Hershey bar)
- You're worth even more to us! (100 Grand bar)
- We'd be in "knots" without you! (chocolate pretzels)
- Your work with children is more precious than gold! (gold wrapped chocolate coins)
- You're making a "mound" of difference in the lives of children! (Mounds)
- When it comes to kids, you're worth a "mint!"
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.

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).

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. 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.

References


**Endnotes**

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2. Daniel Katz constructed this scenario.

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