

1

The Challenges Facing Beginning Teachers

New teachers bring varying backgrounds, motivations, experiences, and preparation levels to their initial teaching experience. Their view of the profession and their role in it is shaped by these motivations, as well as by the context in which they begin their work. This chapter explores the commitments that new teachers bring to their roles and the challenges they face. It sets forth the need for the development of a comprehensive induction program to help all new teachers become fully committed and more effective in the classroom.

A CASE OF BEGINNING TEACHING

Anna was a first-year teacher in an urban school. Although Business was her undergraduate major, she found her initial foray into the business world to be very unsatisfying. She wanted a career that would allow her to make a contribution to society. She heard about the need for teachers—particularly for math teachers—in her area. Not being quite sure what she needed to do to become eligible to work in a teaching capacity, she attended a recruitment fair put on by the local school district. There she heard about the program that would allow her to begin teaching while she completed work on a teaching credential through a district-led or a university-led alternative certification program.

2 Cultivating High-Quality Teaching Through Induction and Mentoring

After taking a test that measured her “basic skills” (reading, math, and writing), she was sent on some interviews at several middle schools. She was hired immediately and was told to sign up for a credential program. She was accepted into a program at a nearby university. She chose the university program because she knew she could earn a credential and a master’s degree at the same time. However, she knew it would take two or more years, including summers, at a pretty intensive pace.

Because she was hired two weeks before school began, she began teaching before she was able to take any coursework. The district put her through a three-day orientation that covered the basics. However, she hardly felt that she was prepared for that first day.

She was assigned to teach five math sections, but they required four different preparations and she was required to move to three different classrooms during the day. There weren’t enough books for all of her students and she didn’t know when they would arrive. She knew about the state standards for students, because they were discussed in her orientation. However, she was perplexed because her students seemed to lack so many of the necessary underlying skills and prior knowledge that would allow them to work at the expected level. She scrambled to find material that was more appropriate to their skills.

Anna was assigned a mentor; he was an English teacher who was able to help her understand the expectations of teachers at her school. However, he did not know much about teaching math. Among her colleagues in the math department, the most senior had been teaching for just three years and was new to that particular school. He had just finished earning his credential. The four math teachers met together regularly, but they wished they had someone else who was a little more experienced to offer advice about the instructional program.

After several months, with the help of her mentor and the math team, Anna felt that she had established some fairly workable classroom management procedures. However, students were not making the progress in math that she had hoped. She assigned homework, but many students just did not turn it in. She called parents, but that did not seem to help. She had difficulty keeping up with all of the demands on her own time. It seemed like she spent many late hours grading papers, planning, and developing new resources.

Her classes at the university added to her stress. She was taking two classes back-to-back on Thursday nights. She was having difficulty keeping up with all the readings and assignments. Some of the readings and assignments seemed applicable to her own situation, but many of them did not.

Her mentor occasionally stopped in and asked if there was anything he could help her with. She didn’t know how to respond to his vague offers of assistance. Although her district offered some new-teacher seminars, she just could not find the time to attend.

Anna survived a very demanding, stressful first year. However, she wasn't sure if she wanted to return the next year or if she wanted to continue to pursue teaching as a career.

THE CHALLENGES OF BEGINNING TEACHING

Beginning teachers enter classrooms today with high expectations for themselves and for their students. Yet, we know that the first year of teaching is a sobering experience for most new teachers, and that, over the course of one year, teachers experience a decreased strength of belief in their own efficacy and in the learning potential of their students (Harris and Associates, Inc., 1991). Nearly every study of retention in the teaching profession identifies the first three years as the riskiest on the job, the years in which teachers are most likely to leave. The drop out rate is highest among teachers in hard-to-staff, urban schools, which have the most difficulty both attracting and then retaining fully certified teachers (Ingersoll, 2001; Urban Teacher Collaborative, 2000).

The early years of teaching are often characterized by a "sink-or-swim" or "survival" mentality because we have often failed to provide for careful support and thoughtful development of teaching expertise over time. Beginning teachers are traditionally expected to assume all the same responsibilities as the more experienced teachers, and are often assigned the most difficult and challenging students, those that their more experienced colleagues do not want to teach. There is no staging or levels of responsibilities as there is in many other professions. It should not be a surprise that new teachers often speak of just trying to survive during their initial years in the classroom.

My first year of teaching was way too stressful. I was not given a curriculum or materials to work with. There were too many kids and not enough desks or books. I really didn't know what I was expected to teach.

Second-year teacher

Many support programs for new teachers focus on the teacher who enters the classroom having been through a comprehensive preparation program. Even the most well-prepared teachers need assistance in applying what they have learned and in moving from a student-teaching situation to their own classroom where they are now fully in charge. For the increasing numbers of teacher who enter classrooms without strong academic and professional preparation, the challenges are magnified.

4 Cultivating High-Quality Teaching Through Induction and Mentoring

I was hired late, after school started. I missed the early orientation. Because I was the last one hired, I got students taken out of other classes. They really didn't want to leave their friends. I got the kids no one else wanted.

First-year teacher

This book is written for those who want to change the way all new teachers are brought into the profession. It is focused on the induction of all new teachers, but gives special attention to induction in our most challenging settings—those where teachers and their students are least likely to experience success. It will help those who plan and implement induction programs to use strategies that help to retain new teachers and help them to become more successful in the classroom.

THE NEED FOR TEACHERS

The need for well-qualified, highly competent teachers has never been greater. Schools nationally will need to hire more than 2.2 million teachers to serve growing student enrollments and to replace the considerable number of teachers expected to retire (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). All who prepare teachers are challenged to produce enough high-quality teachers to meet the demands. School districts are making enormous efforts to attract those who are fully prepared to teach or, in many cases, hiring those who may not be qualified but demonstrate the potential to develop teaching expertise. Yet, these preparation and recruitment efforts will not pay off if teachers are not retained or the new workforce does not help us meet the high standards we are setting for all of our students.

The extraordinary need for more teachers comes at a time in which the demands on teachers are increasing. Schools are expected to serve an increasingly diverse population and to provide more educational and other services to students and their families than ever before. These new teachers will teach in a wide variety of contexts and settings. They will teach in urban, rural, and suburban schools. They will teach the rich, the middle class, and the poor. They will teach students who are more ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse than any country in the world. They will teach students who have strong family support and a caring, nurturing environment, and many who lack this support system. They will teach students at a variety of ability levels and with a variety of learning needs.

At the very time it has become necessary to produce more teachers, we are called upon to prepare a more capable workforce—one that is well

prepared for the challenges and complexities of the years ahead. State and national policy makers have embraced the “standards movement” calling for more accountability for teachers, students, and schools. These new teachers are expected to be “highly qualified” and will be held accountable for results in their classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

I know how important it is for my kids to do well on those tests. I keep the standards before them. I post them on the board and we talk about them. . . . I let them know what they are supposed to be learning with each lesson. I want them to do well.

Third-year teacher

These challenges call for large numbers of new teachers who meet the minimum qualifications, pass all the required tests, and successfully complete increasingly demanding preparation programs. However, a sufficient workforce that meets minimum qualifications will not be enough to meet the challenges ahead. Teaching is difficult and challenging work. Teaching well so that all students develop their full potential and experience success is even more challenging.

Teachers coming into the profession today should expect that they will take the time to nurture and develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities to become expert at what they do. We hope that they care deeply about their work and their students, but they must be more than well intentioned. They should be able to critically examine, reflect upon, and perfect their own practice as they continually seek to acquire new knowledge and expertise.

For these reasons, we have ceased to think of learning to teach as limited to the time spent in an initial preparation program of a defined length. Learning to teach is a lifelong process, one that involves new learning as one comes in contact with each new student and shares ideas, problems, and solutions with colleagues. A crucial phase in this teacher development cycle is the induction, or entry period.

INDUCTION DEFINED

The initial years of service are generally considered to be the first one to three years of teaching. We have come to think of these years as the induction period, or the time in which the novice becomes more familiar with their job responsibilities, the work setting, and professional norms and expectations.

The entry period is a crucial time in the development of a teacher. Ideas, approaches, and practices learned during these early years will often be those that the teacher continues to rely upon throughout the

6 Cultivating High-Quality Teaching Through Induction and Mentoring

teacher's career. We can leave teachers to struggle or get by as best they can during this period, or we can structure and guide this entry period so that it is a period of rich, continued learning and development that leads to success and expert practice.

Induction programs have been developed as a way to effectively and thoughtfully introduce new teachers to their responsibilities and bring newcomers into the profession. The goal of systematically planned program of induction is to help new teachers not just survive, but to succeed and thrive.

Teacher Induction Program: A systematic, organized plan for support and development of the new teacher in the initial one to three years of service.

PREPARATION TO TEACH

Today's teachers come to the profession through an increasing range and types of preparation programs. Consequently, it is important for those who plan the induction experience to know what understandings and skills the new teacher brings to that initial teaching experience.

Many teachers, primarily those we call the "early deciders," take the traditional route to teaching, preparing to teach while they are in college, either in four- or five-year programs of study. They study the subject matter they will teach, earning the equivalent of a major or a minor in at least 38 states (National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification [NASDTEC], 2002). In addition to subject-matter knowledge and general liberal arts knowledge, the best of teacher preparation programs include the following in the knowledge base that is at the heart of learning and shaping professional practice:

- *Knowledge about learners and learning*, including knowledge about human growth and development, motivation and behavior, learning theory, learning differences, and cognitive psychology;
- *Knowledge about curriculum and teaching*, including general and content-specific pedagogical knowledge, curriculum theory, assessment and evaluation, and counseling, as well as knowledge of scientific inquiry, epistemology, communication, and language as they relate to pedagogy;
- *Knowledge about contexts and foundations of education*, including knowledge about schools and society, cultures, educational history and philosophy, principles from sociology and anthropology, legal responsibilities of teachers and ethics. (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1999, pp. 35–38)

To help new teachers begin to apply this knowledge to the classroom, most preparation programs include a range of guided field experiences under the tutelage of more experienced classroom teacher and/or a university supervisor.

Teacher's preservice programs differ in the approach they take to this learning and in the depth of knowledge and practice provided, but in general, teachers can be expected to bring this knowledge and experience to their first position. Nonetheless, these novices are hardly finished learning about the profession they have chosen to enter. Induction programs are intended not to reteach, but to build upon and extend that initial preparation experience.

However, increasingly numbers of teachers are entering the profession without even this basic preparation. Those who plan induction programs need to be aware of the level of preparation the new teacher brings.

ROUTES INTO TEACHING

While the more traditional approach to preparing teachers predominates, an increasing number of teachers come to teaching through what has been broadly termed "alternate routes." Because this term means different things in different state certification systems, the actual numbers entering through alternate routes are hard to measure. The alternatives range from completing an entire professional preparation program in an alternative format (evenings, weekends, summers) to programs that offer certification through demonstrated experience or assessment of knowledge and skills rather than formal training. Most often, alternate-route teachers begin to serve as teachers while they complete their coursework. Rather than undergoing the traditional student teaching experience under the guidance of an experienced teacher, they complete their directed teaching experience and demonstrate competence in their own classroom settings.

I graduated from a very prestigious university with a degree in civil engineering. However, after I graduated, I decided I didn't want to actually become an engineer. I went into it because I was good in math and it was sort of expected by my family. I did some volunteer work in urban schools along the way, and decided to give teaching a try—to see if I could be successful. I'm working on my credential while I teach. I plan to take next year off and go back and get a master's degree in urban education. I'm really committed to this now. I love working with the kids; they seem to respond well.

Second-year teacher

8 Cultivating High-Quality Teaching Through Induction and Mentoring

Some alternate-route teachers enter the classroom with little or none of the initial preparation described earlier. Although they may receive extensive on-the-job training by their own district or by a combination of university courses and staff development activities, they continue to learn while doing the important job of teaching.

Some individuals enter the profession immediately after they complete their preparation programs; others delay entry or do not enter at all. Others move across state lines and find that their preparation to teach in one state is considered incomplete in another. Some persons return to teaching after taking time out to raise a family or pursue other career options.

I worked in the film industry. I'm a single dad. I was tired of the uncertainty of the job market and the crazy life with irregular hours. I always thought I would make a good teacher. I enjoy it immensely. It gives me a chance to use my creative talents with a very appreciative—for the most part—audience.

Third-year teacher

All of these teachers have different learning needs depending on the background, preparation, and experience that they bring to the job. For example, an experienced teacher from Nebraska has much to offer when he moves to Michigan, but still needs to understand things such as the curriculum standards that guide programs in his new state of residence, and district and school policies that may differ from that of his last assignment. He may also be changing grade levels or moving from a rural to an urban setting. He needs to develop new relationships with colleagues and administrators and learn to fit into a new school and new community.

A teacher returning to the job market after several years spent raising a family faces a different set of needs. She brings increased experience with her own children and more life experience. But she will need to become knowledgeable about current curricular expectations and about the latest standards and assessment requirements for students.

The “downsized” computer programmer who decides to become a math teacher probably has a strong work ethic and experience in demanding environments that will stand her in good stead. She may have taught or trained other adults in the use of technology. She may possess knowledge of mathematic concepts, but may need to refresh her knowledge of content of the advanced math courses that she may not have been using in her work. Even if she taught adults, she will need help in relating to adolescents, and will probably need help in making that subject matter comprehensible to students, and in challenging and motivating them to be successful.

Successful plans for inducting new teachers will take into account these differences and recognize the need for differentiating services when

supporting and mentoring new teachers for success with their students. An effective plan for support of all these new teachers will recognize and build on the knowledge and experience the beginning teacher brings to the classroom, assist teachers in gaining what is weak or lacking, and extend learning so that the teacher moves to higher levels of accomplished teaching.

NEW TEACHER MOTIVATIONS AND CAREER CHOICE

New teachers choose to enter teaching for a variety of reasons. Those motivations help explain why they chose to teach and how they will approach their work. It is helpful for those who will be working with new teachers to understand those motivations so they can help new teachers realize their goals for themselves and for their students.

Novice teachers today enter the profession with differing levels of preparation, experience, and expertise. Like the students they will serve, they come with a variety of expectations, hopes, dreams, and understandings. Some will go through a traditional teacher preparation program and will enter the job market immediately after graduation. Others will find their initial career choice unsatisfying and look for more satisfaction in teaching. Still others will seek a second career after early retirement from another, often very successful career,

I've always wanted to teach. My mother was a teacher and I came to school to volunteer in her classroom while I was in high school. I helped her with her bulletin boards and helped her get materials ready for her lessons. I'm teaching in the same school and the same classroom that she taught in for most of her career.

Second-year teacher

Most of these new teachers expect that they will be successful. Many are highly motivated and feel they will be able to positively influence student learning. Others are less certain about teaching as a career choice. However, all of these new teachers will help to shape the educational future of our nation. Together they will directly influence the learning of hundreds of millions of students over the course of their careers. Induction programs need to serve all of these new teachers.

It is worth examining the question of who selects teaching as a career and why they make that career choice. This knowledge makes it possible to intentionally begin to recruit those who demonstrate commitment and potential and then invest in their success. Teachers will be more

10 Cultivating High-Quality Teaching Through Induction and Mentoring

inclined to stay and make a long-term contribution if they feel challenged and fulfilled in their work.

A study of 400 state and national Teachers of the Year (Goldberg and Proctor, 2000) indicates that the following are most important in the decision to enter teaching:

- Desire to work with children
- Love of subject matter
- Influence of a teacher
- Belief in the importance of teaching

Although this was a very selective group of teachers, their motivations are fairly typical of the highly successful teacher who remains vital and active in the profession. In general, teachers choose teaching over other options and see it as a positive and desirable choice. While some complain of the lack of monetary compensation and opportunity for advancement, these deterrents are usually overlooked because teachers seek other rewards and satisfactions.

Susan Moore Johnson and her colleagues have been studying what draws persons to the teaching profession for many years, examining the incentives to teach and what motivates and what matters to teachers. Her early work (Johnson, 1986) led to the conclusion that “better pay and higher status may draw those with an interest in teaching to the profession, but probably are not sufficient to retain or sustain outstanding staff members. Research indicates that the best teachers stay in teaching because of intrinsic rewards, although they may be forced to leave because of poor salary or working conditions” (p. 73).

This finding has been confirmed by her work and the work of others over the years. Johnson and her colleagues recently extended their research on teacher motivations in a project named “The Next Generation of Teachers.” The recent research coming from this team at Harvard (Peske, Liu, Johnson, Kauffman, & Kardos, 2001) points out that the new generation differs from those that are about to retire in important ways. Their research suggests that, “rather than regarding teaching as a lifelong commitment, many new teachers—both those who completed traditional teacher preparation programs and those who did not—approach teaching tentatively or conditionally” (p. 305).

My long-term goal is to go to law school. However, I wasn't ready to go right on. I am still paying off my student loans. I thought I would give teaching a try before heading off to law school. Who knows, maybe I'll get “hooked.”

Second-year teacher

This same research identifies two different orientations toward this more tentative view of teaching as a career. The first is described as an “exploring orientation,” characterized by persons who want to try out teaching, but keep other options open. Explorers are uncertain about how long they will stay, but are open to the possibility that teaching will be a long-term pursuit. The second orientation is the “contributing orientation” characterized by those who see teaching as a way to make a contribution to society. Early career contributors choose to teach before embarking on further education or moving on to another career. Other contributors enter teaching mid-career or as a capstone, seeking a way to gain more satisfaction from their work.

These findings parallel other work that indicates the long-term commitment to one job or even a single career is becoming far less prevalent than in the past. In addition, many women and minorities who would have selected teaching in the past because it was one of few professional opportunities open to them, now have a range of other opportunities.

We have yet to examine what this change in career orientation might mean for the long-term commitment to teach. We do know that it calls for a concerted effort to attract highly qualified individuals and then support them so that they are retained in higher numbers and are successful in their work.

Motivations to teach are usually pursued in the initial interviews with prospective candidates. In hiring teachers, it is important to look for those who are highly motivated to make a difference or to give back to their communities. However, even those who are less altruistically motivated can be encouraged and supported in their induction experience so that they deepen their commitments and see what a positive difference they are able to make in the lives of their students.

TEACHER COLLABORATION

Teaching, once regarded as an isolating occupation in which individual teachers worked quite autonomously behind their classroom doors, is becoming more collegial, drawing on the teacher’s own instincts and motivations to work in a collaborative environment. Teachers are beginning to work more closely with one another in communities of practice. Induction programs offer one way of helping to connect teachers with one another, to initiate deep, rich conversations about practice and about student learning.

My first-year mentor was incredible. She showed me how to set up the classroom, develop lessons, use rubrics, and gave me many teaching tips. When I was getting ready for the first parent conferences, she came in and helped me get everything in order. She has become a real friend.

Second-year teacher

12 Cultivating High-Quality Teaching Through Induction and Mentoring

Formalizing the induction experience has given teachers the permission to admit to the novice status, and to legitimately seek help from others, where in the past they may have felt hesitant to do so. This is more consistent with other professions, which stage levels of responsibilities and hold different expectations of the more experienced professional.

The induction period for teachers has often been compared to a residency period in the medical profession, where novices see their own patients, but work under the guidance of the more experienced doctors. The experienced in the field take responsibility for nurturing and developing the talents of those who will follow them. This sets the stage for a highly consultative practice that characterizes the profession.

The new model of teaching is moving in this direction. It requires that teachers work together to address the learning of students, learn from one another, and problem solve together. It requires that experienced play a role in nurturing and developing the teachers of the future.

THE TEACHING CONTEXT

Induction planners need to consider not only the *act* of beginning teaching, but the *context* in which new teachers learn and perfect their craft once they begin to teach. Teachers begin to teach in a particular setting. Generic knowledge and skills learned in coursework, fieldwork, and student teaching must now be applied to the new context in which they work.

The context of today's multicultural schools is the starting point for a large number of beginning teachers. Yet the vast majority of teachers come from a white, middle-class background. Therefore the cultural gap between children in the schools and the teachers is large and growing.

Preparation to teach in diverse settings is addressed in a number of ways in the teacher's initial preparation. However, knowledge about diversity does not always lead to practices that are effective with diverse groups of students. Sleeter (2001) states that we have concentrated our efforts primarily on the *preparation* of teachers who can teach well in schools serving communities that have been historically underserved. She argues for giving more "attention to what actually happens in classrooms when graduates of teacher preparation programs begin to teach. It is here that the fruits of our efforts has the most impact and there that we as teacher educators need to devote our energies" (p. 102). This argues for more focus on extending that preparation into the induction years.

While all new teachers face particular contextual challenges in beginning to teach, more of these discouraging factors seem to be concentrated and combined in the urban setting. The biggest cultural mismatch between teachers and students is found in our urban schools. New teachers are assigned in high numbers to what are often considered the least-desirable schools. They often work in old, deteriorating facilities and have fewer

instructional resources and access to technology than their neighbors in the suburban schools. Schools tend to be unusually large in urban areas, creating a more impersonal environment. Because of the high turnover of teachers in urban schools, it is often difficult to find enough experienced teachers to mentor and support the new teachers at their own site. There is also a high turnover in administrators, further eroding strong support or leadership for change and improvement.

Beginning a teaching career in any context is challenging for the new teacher. However, some contexts are particularly challenging for the novice. Despite the fact that urban schools present a myriad of challenges, teachers do choose to begin their work in an urban setting.

I want to be part of the solution. This is where I live and I want to give back to my community. It's hard and it's always challenging. I love the kids. That's what keeps me going.

Second-year teacher

A carefully designed support system for the urban educator can ignite the passion for teaching in the hearts and minds of these new educators. The same motivations that enticed them into that setting can help them overcome the discouraging factors and lead them to help today's urban children learn well, stay safe, and graduate by meeting high standards.

OTHER CHALLENGING CONTEXTS

The urban context is not the only challenging context for new teachers. Nor is it the only setting that will present the challenges of working with diverse student populations and students who are English-language learners. All teachers will need to be able to meet the needs of the particular students they serve.

Other geographical contexts present special challenges for new teacher recruitment and support. It is often to recruit and retain teachers to isolated, rural areas and in specific content areas where there continues to be a teacher shortage—such as special education, math, and science.

Rural areas present their own, and sometimes different challenges for teacher recruitment and retention than the urban setting. Rural schools, especially those in impoverished areas, are not always considered ideal places to live by new teachers. Teachers often feel isolated and lack the social and cultural opportunities more readily available in major metropolitan areas. Rural area teachers may feel disconnected from professional colleagues and lack the range of professional development opportunities

14 Cultivating High-Quality Teaching Through Induction and Mentoring

found elsewhere. The limited number of teachers may mean that the teacher has to teach multiple classes or areas outside of their preparation.

The field of special education, where shortage of well-qualified teachers remains high and the attrition rate exceeds that of general educators, brings its own set of challenges for new teachers. It is a challenging field that continues to lack enough qualified teachers to fill the positions available, so teachers often begin with little or no preparation for this often physically demanding and emotionally draining work. Special education teachers often work in regular school settings, where they may be one of few special education teachers on site. The lack of experienced colleagues nearby leads to a lack of good mentors and role models for these teachers.

There is also a growing resentment by other educators of the “encroachment” of special education into general funding streams, sometimes putting a strain on collegial relationships with general education teachers and administrators. Another source of strained relationships is the push for inclusion of special needs students into general education settings. Not all general education faculty welcome this challenge, and some will even actively resist, increasing the anxiety and frustrations of the new teacher, who wants the best for her students. The increased emphasis on all teachers to collaborate in helping students with disabilities succeed in the general curriculum places demands on general and special educators alike.

These are limited examples of teaching contexts that may provide particular challenges for the beginning teacher. Teachers are beginning a career in a specific context that needs to be considered in any induction experience. Teachers need to come to understand how to be successful as a teacher in the context in which they work.

Preparation programs help teachers understand how to work in a variety of contexts, settings, and grade levels. However, by its very definition, induction becomes particular. Teachers are inducted into a particular role in a particular setting with a particular group of students. Induction programs need to help teachers understand and be effective in the context in which they work.

TEACHER MOTIVATIONS AND INDUCTION PLANNING

Teacher motivations are important to consider in planning for their induction. The plan for effective induction actually begins with the recruitment highly motivated, talented individuals who want to make a contribution. The key to recruiting and retaining the new, altruistically motivated and often highly talented new teachers is to make sure they experience success and are able to make the contributions that enticed them into teaching. The support provided in an induction experience is designed to present the positive challenges and rewards of teaching and to keep teachers from becoming disillusioned.

Among all teachers, whatever their motivation, preparation, or career path to teaching, the initial years are the most crucial. The induction experience is too important to ignore. A good beginning experience not only makes a difference in the retention of new teachers but also shapes their practice in many positive ways and puts them on the path to high-quality teaching.

Those who plan and deliver induction programs need to consider that not all new teachers will remain as active professionals. In fact, systematic attention to these entry years in an induction program may also help identify individuals who are not well suited for the profession early in their careers, so that they can be encouraged to pursue other career options. It is much better to remove those teachers from the classroom early in their careers rather than to let them continue year after year.

A PLANNED INDUCTION PERIOD FOR ALL BEGINNING TEACHERS

The support and mentoring that occur in a well-designed induction program are not a substitute for strong academic preparation, but an adjunct to and extension of that preparation. While the entry period represents the time at which teachers are most vulnerable for leaving, it is also the time in which professional norms and practices can be shaped for a career of lifelong practice and professional development. New teachers need guidance during this period, rather than being left to fend for themselves. Teaching is a complex activity that develops over time, and that the concerns, practices, and views of teachers change during the course of their careers.

Support strategies focused solely on retention miss the opportunity to raise the bar for new teachers. Findings from the California studies of induction demonstrate that teachers that are well supported and mentored are more effective earlier in their careers and move more quickly from survival to success (Bartell, 1995). Classroom knowledge and expertise that is the foundation of the reflective, rich, teaching practice required for today's schools are most effectively fostered and developed in close collaboration with colleagues. The most effective induction programs will focus on more than the "survival level" of teacher development; they will quickly move teachers along the continuum of teacher development to expert practice and to high-quality teaching.

It is this growing knowledge about teacher retention, the attainment of professional competence and the importance of the defining early years that have encouraged increase attention to the induction experience. The induction period, in which the initial introduction of novice teachers to the norms and responsibilities of the profession occurs, is a crucial period that is too important for state policies to ignore and for local schools to allow to occur haphazardly.

16 Cultivating High-Quality Teaching Through Induction and Mentoring

The growth of interest in teacher induction is evident in the rapid expansion of programs and state policies since the early 1980s. In early 1984, eight states reported having policies related to beginning teacher support. Two decades later, twenty-eight states had instituted teacher induction policies and funded programs at some level (NASDTEC, 2002) and many have developed standards or expectations to guide this specific period of development for teachers (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, 1992). Nationally, 55% of new public school teachers report participating in some kind of induction program (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

We have learned much about the benefits of high-quality, standards-driven induction that includes mentoring, assessment, and professional development from a more than a decade of research in California (Bartell, 1995; Olebe, 2001a). These benefits include

- Higher retention of beginning teachers.
- Increased levels of professional efficacy and satisfaction.
- Improved teacher performance.
- Earlier identification of weak teachers for assistance or termination.
- More consistent use of instructional practices that lead to higher levels of student achievement.
- More varied and more complex instructional practices being used by teachers.
- Improved ability of new teachers to engage in reflective practice and critical examination of their work.
- Establishment of professional norms of collegiality and expectations for continued learning.

These early years present an opportunity to shape practice in a way that leads to success for teachers and for their students. We owe it to our new teachers and their students to put our time, energies, and resources to work supporting all of our new teachers during this crucial entry period. Our efforts will pay off in the long run in retention and improved teacher performance.

MEETING THE NEEDS DURING A PLANNED INDUCTION PERIOD

New teachers have specific needs that stem from their novice status. They need to become familiar with their own school and district procedures. They need to learn how to manage their classrooms and to keep appropriate records. They need help with the psychological adjustments related to the demands and stress of the job. They have many needs in the area of curriculum and instruction, and in knowing what to teach and how

to best teach it to their own students. They need to learn the norms and practices of their profession. They need to understand and be able to relate to the lives and cultures represented in their classroom. They need to know how to navigate the politics of the school in which they work and the broader context that influences the profession.

Exhibit 1.1 gives examples of the needs in each of these categories. The most effective and comprehensive programs consider this range of needs and recognize that not all teachers need the same kind or level of support and assistance in every area. Too often, the plan for induction is narrowly focused on a limited number of these categories. This book presents a model of induction planning that is comprehensive in scope and gives attention to the range of new teacher needs.

It also presents induction that is highly individualized and differentiated to the individual teacher's particular stage of development and grounded in the teacher's particular classroom context. It is a model of induction that focuses not only on survival and retention, but on success

Exhibit 1.1 New Teacher Needs Addressed in Induction Programs

<i>Category</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Procedural	Familiarity with school and district procedures and expectations for personnel
Managerial	Classroom management strategies; time management; setting up the classroom; getting materials and supplies; scheduling; taking attendance; grading practices; keeping records
Psychological	Managing stress, gaining self-confidence; handling challenges and disappointments; transitioning from student to teacher role; attending to physical and emotional well-being
Instructional	Grade-level curriculum standards and expectations; lesson planning; instructional resources; assessing student progress and using results to shape instruction; using a variety of instructional practices; adapting instruction to meet individual student needs
Professional	Teaching norms and practices; appropriate boundaries and relationships between faculty and students; legal issues; the role of professional organizations; professional development opportunities
Cultural	Developing rapport with students and parents; understanding and appreciating environment; using community resources; valuing diversity; developing cultural proficiency
Political	Getting to know colleagues; contributing to extracurricular program; building relationships with colleagues, staff, and administrators; understanding the broader context of teaching and reform efforts

18 Cultivating High-Quality Teaching Through Induction and Mentoring

and the development high-quality teaching. It is a model driven by standards and expectations for what teachers are expected to know and be able to do to foster student success.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The main points of this chapter and their implications for practice can be summarized as follows:

1. Large numbers of new teachers coming into the teaching force will need to be prepared to teach a more demanding curriculum and be held accountable for results.
2. Learning to teach is a lifelong process; induction is an important phase of development in this process.
3. The induction period, or the first one to three years of teaching, is a time when new teachers should be carefully and systematically introduced to their roles as professionals and into the settings in which they will work.
4. Teachers enter the profession from a variety of preparation routes and bring differing levels of preparation to their initial teaching experience.
5. An effective plan for support of new teachers recognizes and builds on the knowledge and experience the beginning teacher brings to the classroom, assists the teacher in gaining what is weak or lacking, and extends learning so that the teacher moves to higher levels of accomplished teaching.
6. Those working with new teachers should understand what motivates new teachers so they can help new teachers realize their goals for themselves and for their students.
7. Teachers working in particularly challenging contexts, such as urban settings, need to be fully supported in responding to the challenges presented.
8. A planned induction program during the early years helps to retain beginning teachers, improve their performance, and establish habits of practice that lead to career-long development.
9. Teacher needs that should be addressed during the induction period fall into the following categories:
 - Procedural
 - Managerial
 - Psychological
 - Instructional

- Professional
- Cultural
- Political

FOR FURTHER READING

Kane, P. R. (Ed.). (1991). *The first year of teaching: Real world stories from America's teachers*. New York: Walker and Company.

Vivid accounts of beginning teachers, written by new teachers themselves, present a glimpse into the realities of the classroom—the fears and pleasures, the disappointments and the satisfactions. More than 400 teachers submitted accounts of their first-year experience in a national competition and these were the poignant stories selected for sharing.

McDonald, R. E., & Healy, S. (1999). *A handbook for beginning teachers* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley.

This book offers a practical and rich collection of ideas for new teachers. It presents a day-to-day look at the responsibilities of teaching with a focus on student learning. It includes material about how to design learning objectives, organize subject matter, plan lessons, group students for instruction, evaluate student work, and communicate with parents.

Portner, H. (2002). *Being mentored: A guide for protégés*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

The author focuses on being a proactive, receptive protégé that is open to the help provided by a mentor. Topics discussed include

- Building trust and clarifying communication.
- Identifying who does what.
- Learning from watching.
- Deciding where to focus your efforts.
- Planning your professional growth.

Warner, J., & Bryan, C. (1995). *The unauthorized teacher's survival guide*. Indianapolis, IN: Park Avenue Publications.

This book is a very practical guide to the everyday aspects of teaching. It includes advice on how to handle the first day on the job, fit in with staff, develop rapport with students, maintain classroom control, prepare for substitutes, and manage time. There is even a chapter devoted to helping teachers decipher all of the “buzz words” used by educators.