



ASSIST Brief

Advocating Strong Standards-based Induction Support for Teachers

April, 2006

<http://assist.educ.msu.edu>

<http://www.learnport.org>

This monthly electronic newsletter contains information about the ASSIST Website, highlighting web tools that address beginning and mentor teacher challenges, ideas for implementing induction programs, ways to use the tools and resources in your school(s), and current topics in induction. If you would like to submit an idea or news item, contact Marcia Leone at leonem@msu.edu – 517-353-8950.

Please forward *ASSIST Brief* to your colleagues!

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ASSIST Principals' Academy Friday, April 21, 2006

A one-day academy to introduce principals and other administrators to the ASSIST web-based tools and resources and provide basics for planning for comprehensive induction is scheduled for **Friday, April 21, 2006, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the James B. Henry Center for Executive Development, MSU**. Visit the ASSIST website at <http://assist.educ.msu.edu> to see the agenda, explore the tools on the ASSIST Website, and to register. You may also register by phone at 517.353.8950.

Coming this Summer!

ASSIST ISD/RESA Leadership Institute for Teacher Induction

**Wednesday (evening), August 9 – Friday, August 11, 2006
The Homestead, Glen Arbor, Michigan**

Sponsored by the ASSIST project, this two and one-half day institute is intended to provide tools and training **for ISD and RESA administrators who would like to enhance the quality of services to their constituent school districts for new teacher induction and mentoring.**

ASSIST (*Advocating Strong Standards-based Induction Support for Teachers*) is a unique resource designed by faculty at Michigan State University intended to provide meaningful professional development for new teachers during their induction years, and tools and resources for both new and experienced teachers to use as they work together in mentoring-learning relationships and for administrators responsible for implementing induction programs. ASSIST is a free web-based resource available to all educators in Michigan.

Institute Objectives:

1. Learn the elements of effective induction programs and quality instructional mentoring.
2. Learn how to use the on-line induction and mentoring tools, resources and instructional modules located on the ASSIST Website to work with constituents.
3. Develop or improve upon a plan to support new teachers and new teacher induction in constituent districts
4. Develop or improve upon a plan to support mentor teacher skills and learning in constituent districts.

Cost: \$150 per person (covers hotel, meals and materials)

Visit the ASSIST website at <http://assist.educ.msu.edu>

Look for further details coming to your ISD/RESA soon.

Mark your calendars and plan to come and collaborate with fellow ISD/RESA, MDE and MSU colleagues!

Supported by a grant to MSU by MDE with funds provided by the U.S. Department of Education

From the Field: Supporting beginning teachers in the Traverse City Area Public Schools

"The depth of resources on the ASSIST Website represents a good blend of 'nuts and bolts' strategies necessary for new teachers' daily survival, and researched-based tools that help novice teachers shift from a daily survival mode to focusing on positively impacting student achievement." These are the words of Jim Linsell, District Specialist for New Teacher/Mentor Programs for the Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS).

School leaders in Traverse City are intentional about supporting new teachers as they grow and develop during their first three years of service to the district. TCAPS has created the position Linsell fills with the intent of helping their new teachers thrive during this potentially challenging part of their careers. ASSIST is one of three main sources of

information and focus utilized by the district in their induction and support program. TCAPS has 62 new teacher/mentor pairs in their first three years of teaching in the district in the 2005-2006 school year. Linsell sees ASSIST as a valuable part of their efforts in working with this large cohort of new professionals. He wants the ASSIST Website to become a source that new teachers, mentors, and principals use regularly.

As part of the district's commitment to new teachers, Linsell leads seven New Teacher sessions per year for the district's first year new hires. The goals for these after-school gatherings are to help teachers network, become familiar with Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, and gain an understanding of the research-based data and general information that will help them in their assignments.

TCAPS New Teacher Program sessions focus on classroom management, parent conference and communication strategies, lesson and unit planning, emerging professionalism, formative and summative assessment, and authoring a personal philosophy of teaching. Participants stay in touch with each other via a TCAPS New Teacher blog and website. An expansion of TCAPS' mentor training and second-year new teacher program is currently in the works – also using resources from ASSIST.

ASSIST's Website is proving to be an excellent resource for the district. Here are some of the tools that have been particularly helpful:

[Writing Daily or Weekly Lesson Plans](#)

[Tools for Unit Planning](#)

[Tools for Classroom Management](#)

[Questions to ask yourself about your professionalism](#)

[How can I work with a beginning teacher to foster his or her professional learning?](#)

[Mentor Self Assessment](#)

Linsell explains, "Everybody – principals, mentors, and 1st, 2nd and 3rd year teachers have different needs. The ASSIST Website is a place that can meet many of those needs." "One thing," he goes on to say, "that has been especially useful is the helpful way the site categorizes information and activities in a comprehensive way that is truly useful to a new teacher program." It has been helpful to TCAPS new teachers and mentors to have to have an hour of guided exploration of ASSIST in a computer lab each fall so that they can later independently navigate the site to answer individual questions about their teaching and mentoring that inevitably arise later in the school year.

The Traverse City schools are working to provide great beginnings for their new teachers. ASSIST is helping them to accomplish their goal.

--Submitted by Jerry Jennings

For Principals: If you are hiring for the next school year, here are some ideas and tools to help you help teachers new to your school prepare for a good start in the fall.

[Orientation Handbook Template](#)

[Mentor Selection and Assignment](#)

[Resources for mentor selection and assignment](#)

[Phases of New Teachers](#)

[The Anticipation Phase](#) (Before school begins/first weeks of school)

[The Survival Stage](#) (Shortly after the start of the school year)

[Preparing Beginning Teachers for "Firsts"](#)

[Beginning the Year](#)

These ASSIST Web sections contain many tools and resources particularly helpful for beginning teachers in preparing for the start of a new school year: [Tools for class management](#) and [Tools for engaging communities](#). You might suggest that your new hires as well as other teachers in their induction years explore these sections prior to the start of the school year for ideas and tools and to begin preparing. Tools in these sections that are particularly useful in the beginning weeks and months deal with establishing rules and routines, knowing and forming relationships with students and their families, dealing with misbehavior, and much more.

For Principals: Preparing for new more rigorous content expectations and graduation requirements - the impact of induction

The need to improve Michigan high schools is urgent. It is here, right now. We cannot wait five or ten years. In order to compete with the highly-educated students around the globe, we need a rigorous curriculum of math and science, along with strong reading and writing skills. We need this to restore our economy by developing workers here in Michigan that will meet the needs of the 21st Century industries.

-Michael Flanagan, Michigan State Superintendent of Public Instruction

To address this need, rigorous high school content expectations and increased graduation requirements for ALL Michigan students are soon to be approved as policy in Michigan. As a result, a teaching force that is prepared to teach higher level content, and teach it more deeply is imperative. To meet these new mandates, our teaching force will need significantly more rigorous pre-service preparation and continued professional development and support throughout their careers. Both K-12 and higher education will need to partner to find ways to stimulate interest in pursuing a career in teaching, recruit the best, brightest, and dedicated into the teaching profession, then prepare and support them throughout their careers ("creating the pipeline").

New teacher induction is one part of the continuum of teacher preparation and support. It is a key force that significantly contributes to higher teacher quality and retention. It is well documented that beginning teachers who receive effective induction and mentoring support have a greater impact on student learning earlier in their careers and are much more satisfied and likely **not** to transfer or leave teaching altogether.

Why does induction matter?

*Excerpt from a presentation by Dr. Randi Stanulis
ASSIST Project Development Director, 2005*

Why beginning teachers leave the profession:

- Receive inadequate support
- Are overwhelmed with management concerns
- Have little voice in how decisions are made

Why beginning teachers stay in their school:

- Feel empowered and have influence over school decision-making (Shen, 1997)
- Higher salaries
- Positive school climate
- Adequate support systems
- Opportunities for professional development
- Reasonable role demands (Billingsly, 2004; Strong, 2004)

Strong induction programs can accelerate teacher development and increase a teacher's focus on student learning (Moir, 2003).

Organizing for induction **in the school** has potential benefits for **all** participants:

Principals can benefit by:

- Developing closer relationships with teachers and teaching
- Increasing leadership skills
- Building capacity to support teaching and learning

Mentor teachers can benefit by:

- Learning new ideas from novice teachers' recent teacher preparation experience
- Increasing their own expertise through teaching others
- Experiencing a renewed commitment to teaching

Beginning teachers benefit by:

- Assistance and support to develop teaching practice in the classroom
- Becoming more proficient sooner than if left alone

In comprehensive induction, the assignment of a mentor is NOT enough.
Developing mentoring as a PRACTICE matters.

The better the quality of the mentoring, the better the quality of a new teacher's classroom instruction (Gless and Moir, 2001)

Where induction assistance is effective there is a 92% lower chance of the beginning teachers leaving their school for another or leaving the profession altogether (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004).

It takes a SCHOOL and DISTRICT to effectively monitor a beginning teacher in learning to teach.

What is effective induction assistance that can make a difference?

[Components of strong induction programs](#)

[Characteristics of strong induction programs](#)

[Benefits of strong induction programs](#)

[Questions to ask as you research induction programs](#)

[Descriptions of Strong Induction Programs](#)

[Induction Programs in Michigan](#)

Tools for induction:

[Induction Planning Grid](#)

[Cultivating a school culture that supports induction](#)

[My beliefs about teaching and learning, related to induction](#)

[Frustrations of change](#)

For Mentor and Beginning Teachers:

What is classroom discussion and why should it be encouraged?

Spirited classroom discussions are valuable for encouraging critical thinking. They promote articulate speech and respectful, active listening. They also can be a lot of fun, even for kids who are not usually at ease speaking in a group. When students participate in a real discussion, in which they formulate their thoughts on a topic, express their personal judgments, and are respected for their opinions by the other participants, then deeper learning takes place. In these kinds of discussions people have a more memorable experience. Moreover, group discussions serve as a learning lab for democratic principles that really pay off later in life when, as adults, the students participate in society at large. (Elkind and Sweet, 1998)

The primary goal in any discussion is to enhance the understanding of a common topic. Discussion in class involves the sharing of ideas, information, experience, reactions, and opinions. It refers to teaching techniques that emphasize participation, dialogue, and two-way communication. Classroom discussion can help students to clarify issues and relate new knowledge to prior knowledge. Furthermore, it elicits higher levels of thinking than the traditional lecture approach and helps students to retain knowledge. As might be expected, research supports discussion as an effective instructional technique.

By encouraging discussion, instructors implicitly acknowledge that everyone can learn from one another and that each student has something to say. Even "wrong" answers are legitimate. The process of communication increases students' awareness of one another as individuals, and research has shown that the quality of personal relationships can be an important element of the learning process.

Discussions can provide the teacher with valuable feedback about student learning and are also a way to achieve affective objectives. Encouraging students to be more active participants in their learning through interaction with the content and with others can increase their motivation and mastery of the material. *Center for Instructional Development and Distance Learning, University of Pittsburg*

The ASSIST project has identified **“Leading Discussions”** as one of six important areas of teaching on which to focus. Please explore the many tools that have been designed to help you learn to lead productive discussions that can lead to higher level learning. Here is the link to the main page for discussions. There you will find links to many research-based ASSIST tools for leading discussions:

[Leading Discussions](#)