



## ASSIST Brief

Advocating Strong Standards-based Induction Support for Teachers  
October, 2005

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 hot current topics in induction. If you would like to submit an idea or news item, contact Marcia Leone at [leonem@msu.edu](mailto:leonem@msu.edu) – 517-353-8950.

Please forward *ASSIST* Brief to your colleagues!

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### Tools to address critical challenges in learning to teach

#### Spotlight on Diversity

Participants at the ASSIST Summer Institutes for Mentor Teachers identified a comprehensive list of big issues and challenges in learning to teach in the content areas (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, Special Education and At Risk populations at the elementary, middle and high school levels).

**The challenges of working with diverse populations and accommodating diverse learning needs were common themes in all of these areas. Here are some ASSIST tools that can help:**

[Planning for multiple intelligences](#)

[Multiple intelligences inventory](#)

[Background on multiple intelligences and learning styles](#)

[Differentiating instruction in elementary mathematics](#)

[Drawing on multiple intelligences: Using Art in elementary science](#)

[Multiple learning styles in elementary social studies](#)

[Modifying plans based on individual student needs in elementary ELA](#)

[Meeting the needs of students with identified disabilities](#)

[Tools for making adaptations during unit planning](#)

[Differentiated lesson plans: A Writing example](#)

## For Principals

### Ways to introduce ASSIST to staff

**ASSIST is not just for beginning and mentor teachers. The Website contains about 1000 tools and resources that are research based, freely available and downloadable for use by any educator. Here are some ways principals can introduce the Website to staff:**

- Devote a portion of staff meetings to ASSIST – first introduce the basic structure, showing the sections where the various tools can be found (basic overview).
- Choose a challenge your school needs to address and highlight ASSIST tools that can help. You can get ideas from ASSIST Brief, or enlist staff to take a school goal, issue or challenge and research ASSIST tools that can help.
- Electronically forward *ASSIST Brief* to all instructional staff when it arrives.
- Encourage staff to share tools that are particularly helpful in practice. The sharing can be a quick email message to the staff listserv, or quick report at staff meetings.
- Set up mentor and beginning teacher study groups and use ASSIST tools and resources to address issues and challenges: See [Professional Learning Communities-strategies for organizing and allocating time](#).
- Ask mentor teachers and new teachers to include ASSIST in their work together and keep a log of what they used.

## For Mentor Teachers

**Charlotte Danielson writes ...“the ability to reflect on teaching is the mark of a true professional. Through reflection, real growth and therefore excellence are possible.” Just as effective teaching is a set of learned skills, so is mentoring. And, just as professional reflection is how teachers grow, it is also true of mentors.**

Use this rubric to rate yourself on the Active Mentor Scale:

[Active Mentor Rubric](#)

## For Beginning Teachers

[Proactive strategies to make the most of your first years of teaching](#)

### **Tales from the Field** **Wendy Shepard, Principal, Rochester High School**

Rochester High School has almost 1800 students and over 125 staff members. Last year was my first year as the Principal at RHS and I was able to hire 15 new teachers. The need for good mentoring and induction was evident. Last winter I, along with one of my Assistant Principals, was able to attend the ASSIST training in Lansing. We returned to our building to use some of the resources immediately and began planning for what we would like to do in the future.

Over the course of the school year and into the summer we were able to have several mentor teachers attend ASSIST trainings and work with us on support programs for our new teachers. The mentors returned from the conferences confident and excited about working with their mentees. In August we met with the mentors to do some planning for the upcoming school year. We have continued to meet and plan as the year has progressed.

We have not developed a system to use all the tools and materials, but that is our ultimate goal. Across our school district many other principals and teachers have now attended training. We would like to develop some overall training sessions for mentors and then some for mentors and mentees at the district level, as well as use the ASSIST tools for in-house training.

#### **Here are some of the tools we have found particularly useful:**

- We created a mentoring handbook and used many of the tools from the [Organizing Induction For Mentor Teachers](#) section. The Induction Handbook items and the Self-Evaluation for Mentor Teachers were both very helpful in getting our program up and running.
- Once mentors were identified and trained, we met to look at some early pieces of the website to use with mentees in August. Our district has a focus on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). We used the [In the School Working Together section on PLCs](#) as a foundation.
- We then moved into some practical applications as the mentors helped their mentees plan for the first days of school, such as the [In the Classroom Manages a Class](#) section where there are tools for setting classroom rules, forming relationships with students and dealing with misbehavior.
- As the year is progressing, mentors have been encouraged to observe their mentees in the classroom, in a non-evaluative manner. This is a new skill for a mentor; the [Organizing Induction for Mentors](#) section has a sample observation technique tool. Under the [In the Classroom Plans Activities](#) heading there are some very helpful vignettes and discussion starters around building a relationship between mentor and mentee. These two areas work well together as the mentor/mentee relationship forms and develops.

We realize that as we work with the ASSIST website we have only just begun. There are so many helpful tools which we find just by clicking around and using with the site. Our hope is that as we all become more familiar with the site and use the various tools we will be able to build a comprehensive program to use throughout the year in our building and as a district.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT: ASSIST is up on Michigan LearnPort**

The ASSIST Website can be accessed both at Michigan LearnPort <http://www.learnport.org> and at MSU <http://assist.educ.msu.edu>. Both sites are free and provide open access to the full range of tools, resources and instructional modules. Michigan LearnPort is, however, the Michigan Department of Education preferred portal for using the ASSIST resources.

### **By using the LearnPort portal learners will be able to:**

- **Access all tools and resources**
- **Select professional development modules from a catalog of opportunities**
- **Design an individual development plan**
- **Track the completion of modules and use of resources**
- **Receive a certificate of completion for learning through the modules**
- **Join threaded conversation groups with learners across the state**

While the modules ([In Further Study](#) section of the site) are available through Michigan LearnPort, MVU is still working on the necessary administrative infrastructure for all of capabilities listed above.

**Look for further details and ideas for utilizing the modules for professional development credit in upcoming issues of *ASSIST Brief*.**