



ASSIST Brief

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

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

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 – 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 Motivating Students to Learn

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 challenge of motivating students to learn was a common theme. Here are some ASSIST tools that can help:

[Motivating students to learn](#) – Balanced use of motivation strategies

[Motivating students to learn mathematics](#)

[Helping students get unstuck](#) – This article contains links to many resources for motivating students to learn.

[Putting yourself into the learning in elementary social studies](#) (can be adapted for other subjects and levels)

[Using simulations to motivate high school students in social studies](#) (can be adapted for other subjects and levels)

For Principals

Good induction programs matter....

"They matter for retention of new teachers, they matter for improving teacher quality, and they matter for increasing teaching satisfaction. Too many new teachers are leaving the profession because they receive inadequate support, are overwhelmed with management concerns, and feel they have little voice in how decisions are made. The induction years should be recognized as a distinct phase in learning to teach and a key place for learning, growth and support that occupies a special place in the development of a teacher." **Randi Stanulis, ASSIST Project Director**

Check this link for ideas about how to help beginning teachers with challenges they face: [Meeting the challenges of induction](#)

Principals' Academy
Introduction to ASSIST and Comprehensive Induction
(For principals new to ASSIST)
Friday, November 18
Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, MSU

See ASSIST Website for agenda and registration information: [ASSIST](#)

For Mentor Teachers

Why mentoring?

"Teaching is complex, subtle, difficult, and demanding work. It requires a developed set of habits, skills, routines, and specific local knowledge that a beginning teacher can build only by deliberate and reflective practice. Throwing new teachers into classrooms to sink or swim on their own has been an enormously costly tradition, particularly when we consider the effects on students.

A much better way for new teachers to learn the necessary skills, habits, routines, and local knowledge is to build them deliberately with the help of an experienced teacher who takes as a goal helping the new teacher do so, and who tries to help thoughtfully, with care for the potentially good and bad consequences of the interaction. (Tom Bird, Associate Professor, Teacher Education, MSU)

Ideas for establishing this kind of working relationship appear in:

[Mentoring as Partnership](#)

For Beginning Teachers

Tools for establishing routines and managing a class:

[Defining and teaching routines that save time and focus attention](#)

[Establishing and teaching rules for a classroom learning community](#)

[Restrained use of options for dealing with inattention and misbehavior](#)

[Critical Incident Technique](#)

Tales from the Field

Candace Garbacz, Mentor Coordinator, Lake Orion Community Schools

Lake Orion Community Schools is in a high growth area in northern Oakland County. With "Automation Alley" on our doorstep and the beauty of lakes and park land, this area continues to attract families to our district and our school system continues to expand. The need for mentors, appropriate professional development and tools to work with all of our staff has been in great demand. ASSIST has provided us with excellent materials and an opportunity for our mentors and their protégés to work together as partners as well as in larger learning communities to address the needs of the different levels and departments.

The Lake Orion Education Association, in conjunction with Lake Orion Community Schools provides our educators with a wide variety of professional development opportunities, including book studies, mini workshops, a variety of trainings and college level course work. Our own teaching staff develops and leads these sessions, providing our educators with opportunities that address the needs of both individual buildings and individual staff members.

We have now gone beyond the first days and weeks of school where we explored the physical and personnel resources our district, community and county have to offer. We used the ASSIST [Orientation Handbook Template](#) as a guideline for our mentors and mentees to work together to explore the vast array of resources available. Many rich discussions evolved from the "who, what, when and where" the handbook provided. For example, discussions about parent teacher communications and relationships and their importance in the learning community emerged as an important topic of conversation. Using the ASSIST tools found under [Engaging Communities](#), our staff explored strategies for communicating with parents and community to foster support and involvement.

As the leaves began to fall and the air became crisp, we turned our focus to parent teacher conferences, the end of the first marking period and things like classroom management and special services needs that children new to our community may need to access. We are using the ASSIST tools found in the [Communications](#) section of the site and are finding ways to encourage parents to be more involved in their children's education. We found the [Parent Conferences Tool](#) particularly useful in

helping new teachers focus on priorities, materials and structure of their parent teacher conferences.

As the Mentor Coordinator, part of my responsibility is to work with the Education Association to provide professional development and resources that will allow all of our staff to continue to grow professionally. I have been using many of the ASSIST tools as springboards for further exploration into many areas for professional development.

Our novice teachers have begun to look closely at their practice and, with the help of their mentors, have started to "unpack" some of their practices - such as classroom management - and to look closely at some of the factors that may be inhibiting or enhancing their effectiveness. The [Sample Observation Techniques Tool](#) has helped beginning teachers look in depth at some of the components needed for keeping students on task. For example, by using the [Verbal Flow Chart](#) teachers can become aware of how questions and responses are made within their classrooms, and how verbal flow can be used as a management technique and to address the importance of including all students in classroom discussions. Using the observation tools allows mentors and their protégés to look at professional practice in segments and to break down into manageable areas different aspects of the art of teaching.

ASSIST is not just for new teachers! We also use the tools to work with educators who want to improve their practice and are looking for resources and research to help them become better at their craft. As we delve deeper into the web site, our professional conversations are becoming a more integral part of our every day work.

As we continue to use the ASSIST tools we will provide our staff with developmentally appropriate professional development that addresses their needs and the needs of the mentors. We continue to include ASSIST tools in communications to our staff, our mentors and their protégés.