



ASSIST Brief

Advocating Strong Standards-based Induction Support for Teachers
December, 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 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 Aligning Curriculum and Instruction with the Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations

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 aligning curriculum and instruction with the new GLCEs for English Language Arts and Math and the Standards and Benchmarks for Social Studies and Science (GLCEs pending) can be daunting.

The Basics: Links to the GLCEs and Standards and Benchmarks:

[K-8 English Language Arts GLCEs](#)

[K-8 Mathematics GLCEs](#)

[GLCE Accompanying Documents](#)

[K-8 Social Studies GLCEs \(currently under review, pending Board approval\)](#)

[Michigan Curriculum Framework Social Studies Standards and Benchmarks](#)

[Michigan Curriculum Framework Science Standards and Benchmarks](#) (These are links to the entire Framework document – you must scroll to the subject area of interest.)

[Mi Climb](#) contains explanations of Michigan's content area benchmarks and lesson examples.

Here are some ASSIST tools that can help:

[Unit planning: Exploring content expectations](#)

[Tools for planning activities for students](#)

[Curriculum Mapping](#)

[Tool: How do I make sense of the content standards in the Michigan Curriculum Framework? Essential Questions](#)

[Tracking Student Progress with GLCEs](#)

[Exploring content expectations: Middle school math example](#) – can be adapted for other content and levels

[Adapting curriculum mathematically](#) – can be adapted for other content and levels

[Sample Activities to Match the Michigan Mathematics Standards](#) (Scroll down to this title)

[Exploring content expectations: A middle-school social studies example](#)

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For Principals: Working with beginning teachers

As a building leader, don't be fooled when you assign mentors because your role and function with beginning teachers do not go away. Beginners look to you for support and guidance. They need, want, and value you! You will be a vital force in their development and ensuring they remain in the teaching profession.

Check this tool to find out.....

[What beginning teachers need, want, and value in principals](#)

Check this site for tools for.....

[Working with beginning teachers](#)

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For Mentor Teachers: Working with beginning teachers

How can I effectively work with a beginning teacher to foster his or her professional learning?

Check this page and follow the links to tools and resources:

<http://assist.educ.msu.edu/ASSIST/school/mentor/workwith/indexworkwith.htm>

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For Beginning Teachers: Learning about and engaging communities

"Why is connecting the classroom and school with community an important issue for my classroom?"

Because adults in the home are "first teachers" who influence children's attitudes toward learning, values, getting along with others, and communicating and solving problems (according to educational researchers, professional organizations and considerable experience).

We also know that family involvement in children's education improves their achievement in school. By encouraging and supporting all families in your classroom and others in the broader community to become involved in children's education, you will not only enhance your students' learning, but also have the benefit of rich resources for your classroom and school."
(Cheryl Rosaen, Associate Professor, Teacher Education, MSU, ASSIST Project Content Developer)

Check this site for tools and information about connecting with families and community. Be sure to explore the many links for a wealth of ideas and guidance:

[Tools for Engaging Communities](#)

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Components of Comprehensive Induction

Excerpt from Moir, E. & Gless, J. (2003). "Quality induction: An investment in teachers." Full article available at:

<http://www.newteachercenter.org/article1.php>

See also: [Examples of strong induction programs](#)

Quality Induction - Essential Components

A survey of the research literature on teacher induction indicates that this is a unique phase of teacher development, as well as, a period of enculturation and socialization. It has been noted that induction will happen, with or without a program. If induction programs are to live up to their potential, a number of essential components must be in place. These include the following:

1. Program Vision

Quality new teacher programs need to recognize the significance of teacher induction. Program leaders must aspire to more than retention. This sort of advocacy demands a clear vision of how quality induction can help create a new kind of professionalism among all teachers. Anything less runs the risk of creating an induction program that perpetuates the traditional ways of being in schools and inducts teachers into the norms of isolation, low expectations, and inefficacy.

New teacher programs, therefore, cannot be preparing teachers for mere survival in the complex and demanding world of today's schools. Instead, these programs must also have as part of their vision, a new image of the successful teacher whose leadership capacity is developed from the moment the teacher enters a classroom. Induction programs have the potential to become one of the most powerful forces for educational change and professional renewal in the history of public education.

2. Institutional Commitment and Support

School districts and other educational organizations must make teacher learning a priority. Institutional commitment can be demonstrated by designing programs that ensure adequate time and resources for new teacher learning and mentor development; by establishing policies that protect new teachers during the critical stage of induction; and by making teacher development the centerpiece of educational reform across the district. Clear lines of ongoing communication and strong cooperation between curriculum and instruction divisions and human resources administration can help. Multidimensional collaboration across programs, stakeholder groups, and educational organizations requires careful program coordination. At the same time, successful induction programs demonstrate flexibility and seek integration with site- and district-level reform initiatives while balancing the new teacher's already steep learning curve with the needs of these local improvement efforts.

3. Quality Mentoring

Just as the classroom teacher is widely considered the essential ingredient for student learning and educational reform, so, too, is the new teacher mentor the most important feature of any high quality induction program. No technology, no curriculum, no standardized structures can substitute for the power of a knowledgeable and skillful veteran to move a novice teacher to ambitious levels of teaching. Quality mentoring requires careful selection, training, and on-going support.

Not every outstanding classroom teacher is necessarily a talented mentor. Selection criteria include: strong interpersonal skills, credibility with peers and administrators, a demonstrated curiosity and eagerness to learn, respect for multiple perspectives, and outstanding instructional practice.

Supporting new teachers is complex and demanding work, and it involves learning skills other than those that most classroom teachers possess. It is critical, therefore, that we think not only about what a new teacher needs to

be successful but also what a mentor teacher needs to know and be able to do in order to support a new teacher. The pedagogy of mentoring includes an in-depth understanding of teacher development, professional teaching standards, performance assessment, and student content standards, along with strategies for classroom observation and a variety of coaching techniques. This learning occurs most successfully when mentors are given regular opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills and to problem-solve issues of practice.

4. Professional Standards

Occasional mentoring and "feel-good" support overlook the enormous instructional impact induction programs can have when they are focused on a teacher's classroom practice. Clearly-articulated standards of professional practice are essential in helping both the novice teacher and their mentor communicate effectively about and keep all eyes focused on high quality teaching and increased student learning. Professional standards should be used then to guide new teacher learning and growth in meaningful ways, by helping these novices set clear, significant, and achievable goals; reflect upon and articulate successes and challenges; identify effective practices in their own classrooms and others'; guide new learning and next steps; and recognize the complexity of good teaching and the need for career-long professional development.

In a developmental context, standards "up the ante" by helping new teachers craft a professional vision of ambitious teaching.

[Michigan Teacher Induction Standards](#)

5. Classroom-Based Teacher Learning

Teacher learning that involves on-going "joint work" in the context of a teacher's classroom is arguably the most significant form of professional development. The most effective mentors are those that intimately know the community, school-site, and classroom context of their novice partners. This requires ample time for observation, collaborative lesson design, model teaching, veteran teacher observation, reflection, analysis of student work, goal-setting, and assessment against professional standards. Furthermore, the mentor also models for the novice the importance of designing classroom instruction based on assessed student needs.

Strong mentors partner with their new teachers not only to help each novice understand how best to meet the learning needs of their own students, but how to understand, make meaning of, and use the various curriculum frameworks, standardized assessments, and grade-level expectations that are an important part of the new teacher's context. This can not happen in a one-size-fits-all model of support. Effective induction programs help new teachers become on-the-job learners. Well-balanced programs of new teacher support also provide opportunities for novices to come together with other beginning teachers to learn from each other and to discuss issues and concerns with those having similar experiences. Strategies for learning together, both inside and outside the school, are widely recognized as important features of professional development.

Teacher Induction: A Catalyst for Change

Ideally, an investment in teacher quality starts at the earliest stages of a teacher's career and continues throughout a professional lifetime. In such systems, induction not only serves as an engine to drive educational reform but also offers veteran teachers new professional roles that capitalize on their wisdom and expertise.

This kind of shared learning and collaboration is contagious. Hand in hand, mentors and their new teacher partners are leading school communities in providing high quality and equitable instruction for all students.