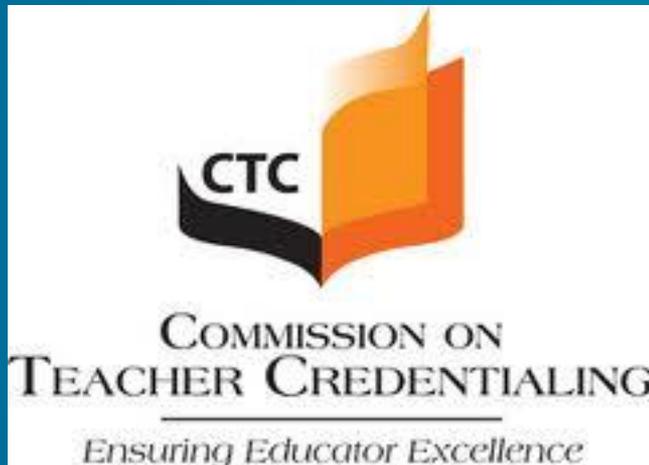




California's Induction Programs



Presentation to
the Commission
on Teacher Credentialing

September 26, 2013

Liam Goldrick, Director of Policy
Wendy Baron, Chief Academic Officer

A close-up photograph of a hand raised in the air, likely in a classroom. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with fingers slightly curled. The background is blurred, showing other people in a room, suggesting a group setting like a school. The lighting is soft and even.

when we focus
on teachers,
our students
succeed

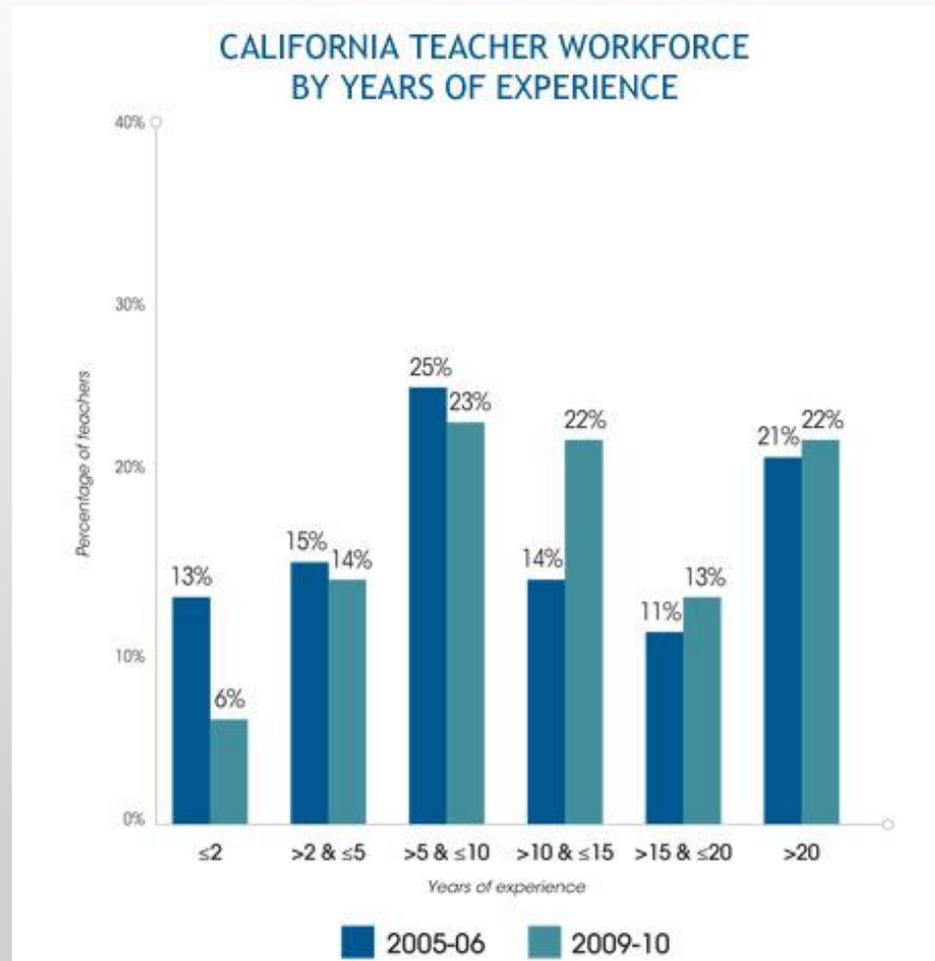
The Most Important School-Based Influence on Student Performance Needs Support

STUDENTS TAUGHT BY MENTORED TEACHERS OUTPERFORM STUDENTS WITH UN-MENTORED NEW TEACHERS, BUT WE FACE CHALLENGES . . .



- Nearly 50% of teachers leave the profession in 3-5 years.
- Teacher attrition costs the US \$7.3 billion.

Experience in the Teaching Force



The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, WestEd
http://www.cftl.org/Teaching_and_California's_Future.htm

Why It Matters

NEARLY 15 MILLION AMERICAN STUDENTS, MOST IN DISADVANTAGED SOCIOECONOMIC AREAS, ARE TAUGHT BY A NOVICE TEACHER.

More than 300,000 new teacher hires = elementary & secondary teachers (NCES Projections to 2020)

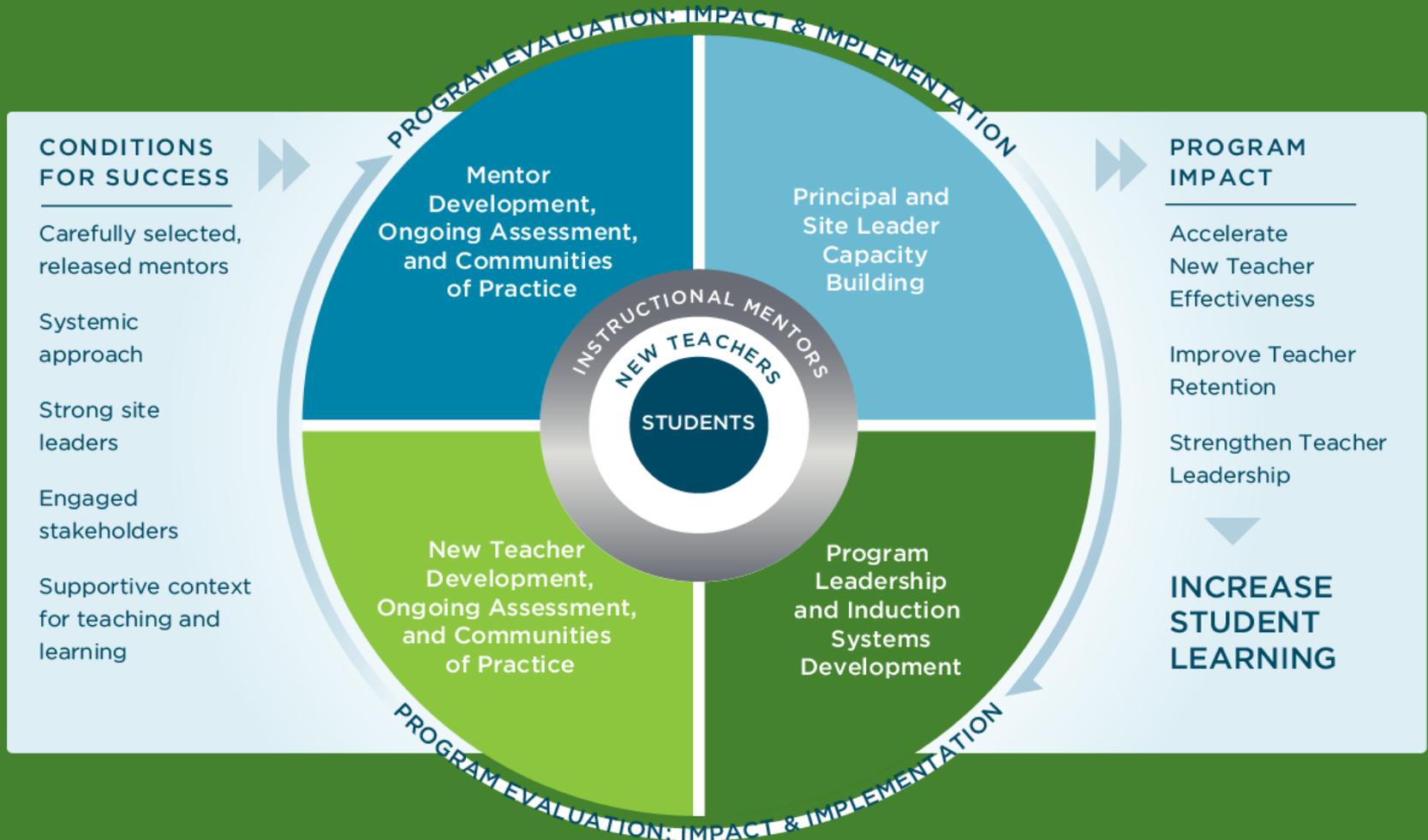
New teachers need to create positive, productive, learning environments AND differentiate instruction, so students thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

Without adequate support, new teachers struggle to create effective learning environments and successfully teach students with diverse learning needs.

Unique Features in CA Credentialing

- Over more than two decades, CA has been actively developing and refining an aligned, coherent, congruent Tier 1 and Tier 2 teacher and administrator credentialing system
- Assessments of candidates are based on professional standards (CSTP, CPSEL), criteria, and evidence
- Credential programs are contextualized, personalized, and based on Program Standards for pre-service, induction, and administration
- Programs are expected to collect, analyze, and use assessment data for continuous improvement annually.
- Credentialing programs are evaluated by state agencies and peers, calibrated for this purpose, within a program review cycle.

NTC Program Theory of Action: Advancing New Teacher Practice



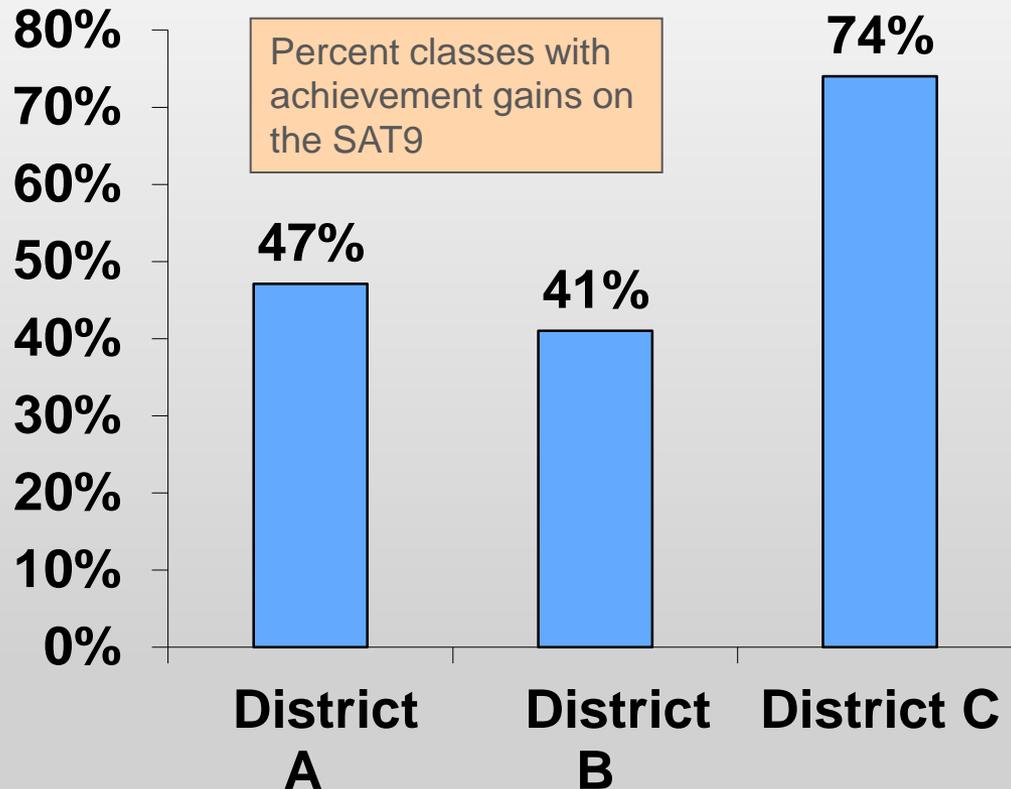
New Teacher Development: What Evidence Suggests



IMPACT OF FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

- The greatest improvement in instructional practice takes place in the early years in the classroom
- Comprehensive induction programs:
 - Accelerate the effectiveness of beginning teachers
 - Produce greater student learning gains
 - Strengthen new teacher retention

Intensive Induction Results in Greater Student Learning Gains



- All three districts have a 1:15 mentor-novice ratio for Year 1 teachers.
- For Year 2 Teachers, District A has a buddy system, District B has 1:35 ratio, whereas District C maintains 1:15 ratio.

Percent of Classes with Achievement Gains: Data for New Teachers in Three California Districts

Fletcher, Strong & Villar (2008)

Benefits of High-Quality Induction

- Higher student achievement gains
- Accelerated beginning teacher growth and development
- Reduced attrition and turnover
- Increased job satisfaction
- Greater intent to remain teaching
- Cost savings



Elements of New Teacher Induction: What Evidence Suggests

POLICY/PROGRAM DESIGN

- Two-year program length
- Rigorous mentor selection
- Full-release mentors
- Frequency of mentor contact
- Assigned mentor
- Assessment information used to inform support



Review of State Policies on Teacher Induction



- 27 states require some form of induction/mentoring for all BTs.
- 15 states have induction program standards.
- At least 29 states address mentor eligibility.
- 31 states require mentor training. 15 require training *plus* ongoing mentor PD.
- 30 states address issue of mentoring time within their policies. 11 states quantify it.
- 14 states provided dedicated funding for induction and mentoring in the 2012-2013 school year.
- At least 22 states require participation in or completion of an induction program to advance beyond initial credential.

Recommendation #1: High Quality Mentoring



- Rigorous recruitment and selection of mentors
- Sanctioned time for mentor-teacher interactions with 60-90 minute, weekly meetings
- A 1:16 ratio of mentors to new teachers
- High-quality mentor professional development with a 2- or 3-year structured professional development series
- Ongoing mentor community of practice and rigorous assessment of mentoring practice

Recommendation #2

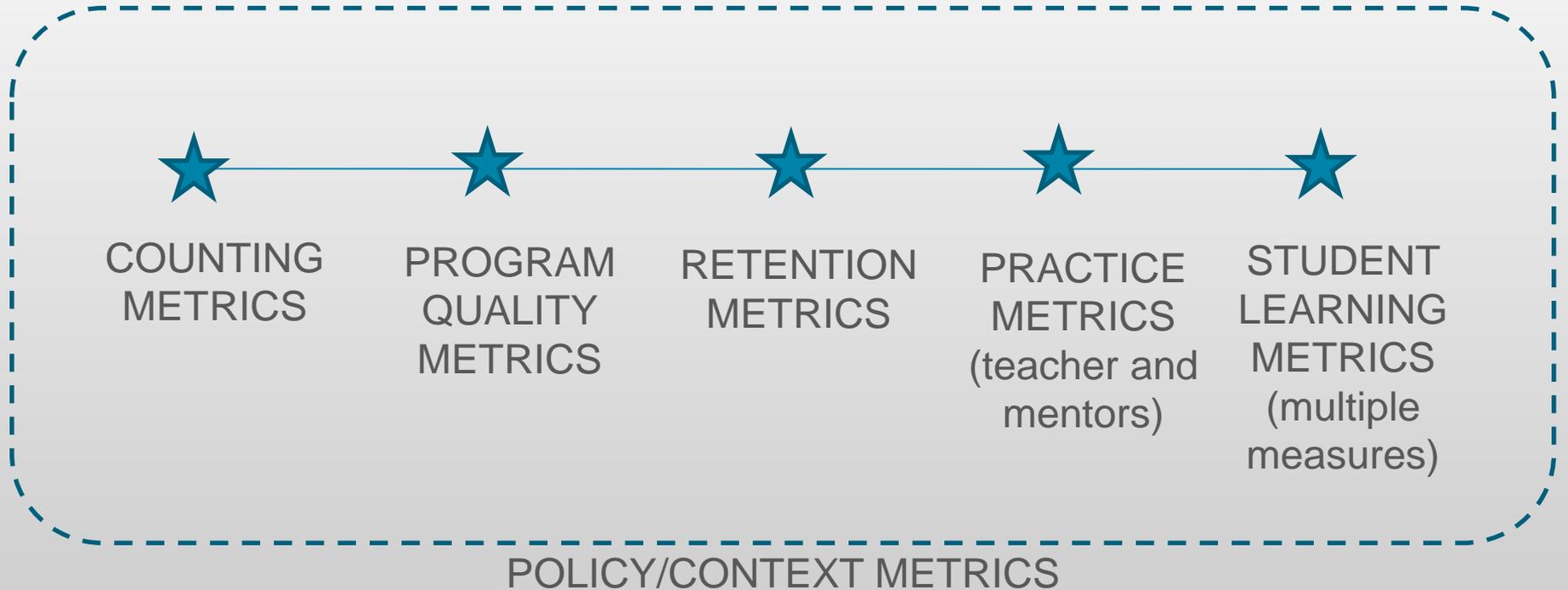
Matching Requirements



- Ensure that districts and other credentialing institutions (e.g., universities, colleges, TFA and TNTP) have requirements to provide equitable, high quality, comprehensive induction for all participating teachers, based on a common set of Induction and Professional Teaching Standards
- Reconcile requirements to support teachers who do not currently fall within BTSA guidelines (temps, long-term substitutes, interns)

Recommendation #3

Program Evaluation: Impact Spectrum



Recommendation #4

Assessment and Evaluation



- Foster participating teacher-mentor-site principal collaboration, communication, and coordination within a Comprehensive Induction Program.
- Use assessment information to inform on-going support and professional development for participating teachers.
- Base credentialing on competency vs. completion, using continuous formative assessments of teaching practice and student learning, with clearly defined criteria and performance-based assessments at mid-year and end-of-year during two years of induction. Final summative assessment would be used to determine credentialing.



Thank you

For More Information

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Comprehensive Induction or Add-on Induction?

Impact on Teacher Practice and Student Engagement

Dr. Lisa S. Johnson, *Researcher, New Teacher Center, University of California, Santa Cruz*

Does basic mentoring really serve as a solution to teacher development? Are more detailed definitions of induction and mentoring needed to address the needs of the new teacher? What is comprehensive induction and how does it differ from other induction programs? Does a more comprehensive model result in better outcomes for teachers or students?

These questions perplex many within the world of education.

In recent years, we have seen a rapid expansion of policies and resources devoted to new teacher induction. Most of these policies are based on an assumption that induction programs have a positive influence on teacher quality and student learning. Yet there is little evidence to support claims for such policies regarding the distinct components of induction programs or their effectiveness (Wang, Odell & Schwille, 2008). Scholars have argued for targeted mentoring that addresses the learning needs of beginning teachers with regard to instructional practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Some suggest that induction efforts may increase teacher knowledge, student achievement, teacher satisfaction, and retention (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Fletcher, Strong & Villar, 2008; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

There is, however, insufficient data to assist educators and policy makers in determining the most effective or critical components of induction programs. There is scant consensus around a number of induction issues, for example: the most effective mentoring condition (full-time or add-

on mentoring); the amount of time required to enhance the development of beginning teachers; the amount of professional development mentors need to be effective; and the level of match (subject or grade level) required between mentor and beginning teacher. Furthermore, few studies explore the different components of induction and their effects on teacher and student outcomes.

Given such a dearth of evidence and the current state of induction policy, this study was developed to examine differences in student engagement and teacher instructional practice in two types of induction conditions: comprehensive full-time induction and add-on induction. These two conditions differed in

- the amount of mentor participation in professional development on induction;
- the amount of time mentors could spend on structured observations, reflection, and feedback focused on pedagogy;
- mentors' abilities to prioritize induction efforts;
- mentors' abilities to serve as liaisons between beginning teachers and administrators; and
- the amount of professional development mentors could offer beginning teachers.

The goal of this study was to examine the instructional practice of beginning teachers who were mentored in these two conditions and to explore differences in instructional practice and student engagement.

Background

In 2001, a collaboration began between a large urban school district and the New Teacher Center, UCSC. This collaboration aimed to improve beginning teachers' instructional effectiveness and increase the academic engagement of students through a series of mentor trainings, including one focused on differentiated instruction. The differentiated instruction training was particularly relevant as educators in the district serve culturally and linguistically diverse students living in a socio-economically depressed community.

TABLE 1. DIFFERENCES IN INDUCTION CONDITIONS

	Comprehensive Induction	Add-on Induction
Professional Development	Mentors receive frequent professional development from the district and NTC.	Mentors receive less-frequent professional development due to schedule conflicts
Time Spent with New Teachers	Mentors meet weekly with new teachers; meetings include structured observations, reflection, and feedback focused on pedagogy.	Mentors meet inconsistently with new teachers; occasional observations, reflection or feedback focused on pedagogy are provided.
Priority and Availability	New teachers and induction program are the priority of mentors; mentors work full-time mentoring new teachers; school, administration, and new teachers assume mentor is available to help.	Mentors work full-time as curriculum coordinators, school resource specialists, etc.; school, administration, and new teachers may not assume “add-on” mentor is available to help.
Offerings to New Teachers	Weekly meetings, observations, and monthly new teacher seminars are offered by mentors; mentors support communication between administrator and new teacher.	Meetings, observations, seminars, and communication with leadership are not required; these offerings are occasionally provided by add-on mentors.

Differentiation focuses on assessing students’ specific learning needs and tailoring instruction to best support their learning. The training and the resulting initiative aimed to teach mentors and beginning teachers strategies to improve their instructional effectiveness and student engagement. Both comprehensive and add-on mentors were offered training in differentiated instruction that took place over three seven-hour training days. In this training, mentors

- identified best practices in professional development and defined differentiation within the classroom context;
- applied the five basic components of differentiated instruction;
- examined and practiced differentiated pre-assessment of students;
- developed structured inquiry models to promote ongoing implementation;
- applied essential components of differentiated instruction through flexible grouping, and tiered assignments;
- examined mentor tools that support beginning teachers in differentiating instruction; and
- met in teams to assess strengths and challenges and plan next steps for supporting new teachers in implementing differentiated instruction in their teaching practice.

Study Design

Four pairs of new teachers matched with respect to school, subject matter and grade level were selected. In each pair, one was mentored by a full-time comprehensive mentor and one was mentored by an add-on mentor. The district selected mentors and matched new teachers with mentors prior to the implementation of this study, thus matched pairs were not randomly assigned, but selected post-assignment. Eight hundred sixteen students attending one of three secondary schools were included in the study. All schools had student populations that were multiethnic, multilingual, and primarily low SES (60–67% free and reduced-priced lunch).

The study examined the development of teacher practice in differentiated instruction through pre- and post-assessments of beginning teachers and their students using self-report surveys. These surveys measured the use of differentiated instruction strategies by asking teachers about their use of pre-assessment, flexible grouping, setting goals, multiple assessments, resources, and teaching styles.

Teachers completed the in-class differentiated instruction surveys at the end of three class periods during the course of one week in both fall and spring semesters. Student surveys, completed at the same time, examined student engagement through a composite score determined by assessing factors such as student interest, concentration, enjoyment. This measure of student engagement is a significant predictor of academic achievement, continuing motivation, and commitment to educational opportunities (Shernoff & Hoogstra, 2001).

The operating hypothesis of the study was that teachers mentored in differentiated instruction strategies through the comprehensive induction model were more likely to incorporate differentiated instruction in their classrooms than those teachers mentored in differentiated instruction strategies through the add-on induction model. And, as a result, the increased use [or “implementation”] of differentiated instruction would lead to a more engaging classroom experience for students over time.

Research Findings

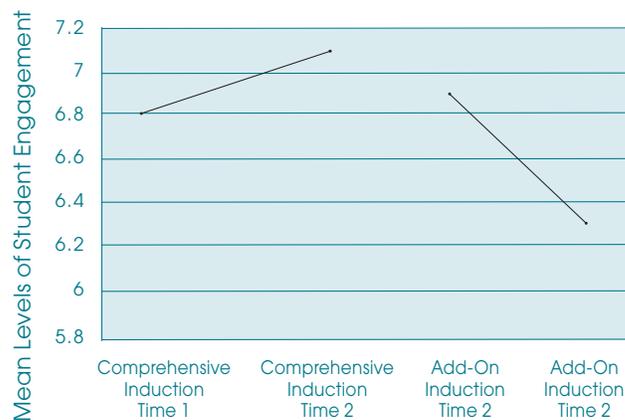
Differences in the use of differentiated instruction strategies were found between the two induction conditions. An analysis of in-class teacher survey data indicated that the four teachers who experienced comprehensive mentoring were more likely to use differentiated instruction strategies than were the four teachers who experienced non-comprehensive mentoring. This difference was significant when looking at the surveys from both pre and post data.

Academic engagement was assessed through analysis of the student surveys. These surveys took into account a variety of student experiences, including their interest, enjoyment, concentration and participation in the lesson, and also included the teachers’ assessment of student knowledge. General trends indicate that student engagement decreased slightly over time for the entire sample (from

7.0 in Time 1 to 6.68 in Time 2), echoing national student samples (Anderman & Maehr, 1994).

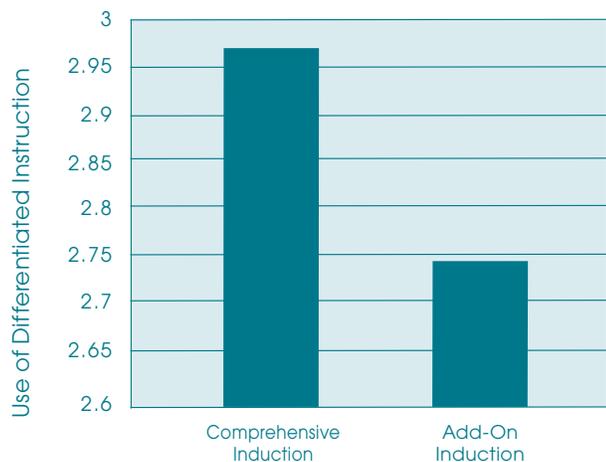
It is noteworthy that new teachers in the comprehensive induction category showed statistically significant increases in their levels of in-class student engagement, moving from

FIGURE 2.
MEAN LEVELS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT BY INDUCTION CONDITION*



*Based on self-report surveys of students (n=816) using a 10-point scale with 0=not at all and 9=very much

FIGURE 1.
USE OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES IN THE CLASSROOM BY INDUCTION CONDITION*



* Based on self-report surveys of teachers (n=8) using a 4-point scale defined as: 1=rarely, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=frequently.

6.8 to 7.1 on a ten point scale (0=not at all and 9=very much), while their counterparts in the add-on mentoring condition experienced a decrease in in-class student engagement (from 6.9 to 6.3) that was more in keeping with the overall sample. These statistically significant differences suggest that teachers in the comprehensive induction model defied the general trend of decreased academic engagement over time while their add-on induction counterparts did not.

Findings about differentiated instruction in the earlier analysis together with these data suggest that teachers who used strategies for differentiated instruction had greater gains in student engagement than did teachers who did not use differentiation. These data were further supported by an additional regression analysis which suggested that a one-unit increase in the use of differentiated instruction strategies (a 4-point scale defined as follows: 1=rarely, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=frequently) resulted in a 1.8 increase in student engagement scores (a 10-point scale with 0=not at all and 9=very much).

Teachers that were inducted by the comprehensive model were more likely to use differentiated instruction strategies, which may have served to increase the level of engagement of their students from fall to spring semesters. Those teachers

that were inducted by the add-on model were less likely to use differentiated instruction strategies, and experienced decreasing levels of student engagement in their classrooms over time.

Summary and Conclusions

This study contributes to the knowledge and practice of teacher educators, policy makers, and administrators as they design induction policy and practice, particularly given the need to structure induction programs for efficiency and effectiveness. Comprehensive induction programs that include training in differentiated instruction may increase the use of differentiated instruction in the classrooms of beginning teachers, which in turn may lead to increased student engagement.

Educational leaders may find these results useful in making decisions about the time mentors are allowed to work with beginning teachers, the professional development of mentors and teachers, and the opportunities provided by induction programs for teachers to learn and network. It is important to note that add-on induction may have little effect on student engagement if mentors do not participate in professional development in differentiated instruction.

We know from both national data and the data collected at NTC that student engagement generally decreases over time. Therefore, it is notable that the comprehensive induction model examined in this study was able to defy this downward trend, actually increasing levels of student engagement as the school year progressed.

While continued examination of these models is warranted, these findings contribute to the body of

literature that informs educators and policy makers about the implications of induction support for teacher quality. Further studies that explore these differences while accounting for multiple teacher and student learning outcomes would be of use to educators as they consider developing quality induction programs and policies.

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About The New Teacher Center

The New Teacher Center (NTC) was established in 1998 as a national resource focused on teacher and administrator induction. NTC implements and promotes induction best practices through a variety of innovative professional development opportunities and materials that assist educators and policy makers in supporting the next generation of education professionals. Using an integrated, collaborative approach, NTC strives to support essential research, well-informed policy, and thoughtful practice that encourage teacher development from pre-service throughout the career of a teacher.

New Teacher Center

Improving Teaching and Learning in America's Schools



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Teachers Are the Center of Education:

Mentoring, Teaching and Improving Student Learning

Glossary

Glossary terms are highlighted in bold throughout the report.

Classroom management: a teacher's approach to establishing order in the classroom, building a culture of learning, and monitoring the behavior and actions of students.

Collaborative Assessment Log: an assessment tool that frames and guides mentor and mentee conversations to celebrate classroom successes, identify and prioritize challenges, and commit to specific next steps; the tool helps mentors more easily assess new teacher practices and focus on each new teacher's specific needs.

Cycle of Inquiry: an investigation into a specific topic related to teaching; begins with the identification of a challenge and moves through a process of learning new ways to address the problem, data-collection and analysis, and reflection about the activities related to specific outcomes.

Formative assessment: an ongoing, evidence-based measurement of student and teacher growth over time, involving a variety of data sources and intended to inform ongoing activities or development.

Formative Assessment System (FAS): a New Teacher Center–developed set of tools and protocols that help mentors guide new teachers and mentors through an ongoing process of assessment, goal-setting, data collection, analysis and reflection to improve student learning and teaching practice.

Induction: the phase of a teacher's career that begins upon hire; a two- to five-year phase of development during which new teachers learn to select and employ effective instructional strategies and student assessments; a period of socialization into the professional norms of a school, its district, and the profession; on-the-job training through a specific program dedicated to addressing the unique needs of new teachers.

Inquiry-based: an approach to problem solving that involves problem identification, implementation of activities to solve the problem, data collection, and reflection on what works and why.

Mentor: experienced and effective teacher who has defined time, preparation and professional development to coach new teachers in a targeted and intensive way, using specific skills, professional standards and protocols.

Mentoring: one-on-one, individualized support of a beginning teacher, typically occurring on a regular basis, over a long-term period; involves collaboration, inquiry and reflection.

New teacher: a teacher newly entering the teaching profession, typically "new" for the first one to three years on the job; may or may not have completed a teacher preparation program prior to teaching.

Observation: a specific type of interaction between two professionals in which one silently watches the other's practice over a short period of time for the purpose of collecting data of student engagement/ learning and teacher practice; data will be discussed and analyzed during a post-observation conference, and new approaches and areas for improvement will be identified.

Professional Learning Community (PLC): a group of peer educators who meet regularly to engage and collaborate on specific topics related to professional practice.

Reflective practice: the process of thinking about and learning from one's own teaching practice and from the teaching practices of others; its purpose is to gain new perspectives on the dilemmas and problem areas inherent in the work of teaching, improve judgment and teacher decision making, and increase the probability of taking informed action in future professional situations.

Teacher practice: day-to-day teaching performance that includes preparation, assessment, lesson design, instruction, student engagement and professional collaboration; the art and science of teaching.



Teachers Are the Center of Education:

Mentoring, Teaching and Improving
Student Learning

Project Description

This series of reports — *Teachers Are the Center of Education* — was developed to highlight the importance of teachers and the quality of their work. This specific report shines the spotlight on one aspect of teacher work: the importance of mentoring and the leading role that exemplary, experienced teachers are taking in this endeavor. This report is a partnership between the College Board, the New Teacher Center and Phi Delta Kappa. Mentors were nominated by the New Teacher Center. With one exception, in each case a writer spent a day observing the mentor and then interviewing him or her and recording the conversation. In the case of the mentors from Montana, the interviews were held over the phone. The final stories reflect only a small portion of the conversations and observations.

Acknowledgments

We want to thank the mentors and the mentees who are profiled in this report. They could not have been more supportive in allowing us to visit and in sharing their thoughts about their profession, their students, mentoring and American education. Our thanks also to the administrators in these schools and districts for allowing us to visit.



Contents

Foreword 2

Recommendations 3

Description of Mentoring and the New Teacher Center 4

Teacher Profiles

Tammy Phuong, Austin, Texas 6

Ryan Stewart, East Palo Alto, Calif. 10

Rebecca Costello, San Jose, Calif. 14

Leslie Baldacci, Chicago, Ill. 16

Amy Keys, Santa Cruz, Calif. 20

Frank Pantano, Boston, Mass. 22

Alyson Mike/Rolland Karlin, Montana 26

Kristin Walker, Durham, N.C. 34

Foreword

Effective teachers are made, not born.

Everyone interested in education — and all others with common sense — know that teachers have a profound impact on student success and failure. So it follows that concern for students should be matched by concern for teachers. But reality does not bear this out. The truth is that we do not give teachers anywhere near the support they need. The result: Half of our teachers leave the profession within the first five years.

Who suffers most from this pattern? It is our students because they are too often deprived of teachers who have mastered teaching. Which students suffer most? Traditionally underserved students, because their schools have the highest teacher attrition rates.

But all is not gloomy. We have structures and systems that can not only persuade teachers to remain in the profession but also make them better teachers, leading to increased student learning.

One of these systems is mentoring, the process through which experienced teachers support and develop those new to the profession.

In the report that follows, you will read the stories of nine teachers who have taken time off from their classroom practice to contribute their knowledge and experience to their less experienced colleagues and the next generation of teachers. We tell these stories not only to honor their work but also to show that new teachers can be retained at much higher levels and that their skills and classroom abilities come close to matching those of their more experienced colleagues.

This report is the fourth installment in *Teachers Are the Center of Education*, a series created to highlight the critical importance of teachers, salute their great work and help amplify their voices. Successful educational reform always needs their active involvement. As the nation looks to rewrite the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we must be sure to turn to them for advice and counsel.

Gaston Caperton
President
The College Board

Ellen Moir
Chief Executive Officer
New Teacher Center

William J. Bushaw
Executive Director
Phi Delta Kappa International

Recommendations

Teachers are the most important school-based factor in improving student achievement, especially for low-income students, but new teachers face a steep learning curve when they enter the profession.

In order for new teachers to have the greatest impact on student learning:

- All first- and second-year teachers must be paired with a full-time mentor.
- Mentors must support teachers through a variety of proven practices including: frequent and regular meetings with new teachers that focus on teaching and learning; classroom observations; tailored pre- and in-service professional development on analysis of student data; support for peer networking; and teaching of leadership development skills.
- The federal government, or a coalition of states, must design common standards for mentoring that include outcomes, professional development and program components.
- Mentoring programs must provide time for mentor preparation and ongoing learning, new teacher peer networking, new teacher pre- and in-service professional development and the development of mentor and new teacher leadership skills.
- All mentoring programs must incorporate research into their work to measure the impact on teacher retention, teacher effectiveness and student achievement.



New Teacher Center

The New Teacher Center (NTC) is dedicated to improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers. By offering extensive and targeted support to new teachers through carefully crafted mentoring programs of professional development, NTC works to improve the overall effectiveness of the teaching profession and to retain and sustain great teachers, especially in the country's hardest-to-serve schools. Additionally, NTC works to influence key policy decisions related to new teacher support at the state and federal levels through consultation to policymakers, research-based policy briefs, and technical assistance to state and district induction policy leaders. With an \$18 million annual budget, NTC operates in 35 states and with more than 200 public school districts, supporting more than 26,000 new teachers and 6,300 mentors. Through NTC's online mentoring program, the organization reaches teachers in all 50 states.

NTC addresses the needs of new teachers by providing an intensive mentoring ("induction") model for first- and second-year teachers. NTC's induction model utilizes carefully selected, prepared and well-supported mentors who provide intensive instructional support to beginning teachers throughout their initial years in the classroom. NTC's approach enables experienced teachers to become effective mentors by providing them with two critical elements:

- 1. Mentor professional development** where experienced and effective teachers learn and refine mentoring skills, problem-solve issues of mentoring, refine their own set of classroom practice skills, and develop leadership capacity.
- 2. Tools and assessments** that equip mentors with the tactical resources that help them collaborate and guide new teachers on the path toward excellent outcomes.

When tightly coupled with ongoing opportunities for mentor training and collaboration, these elements provide a framework for new teacher induction work that is every bit as challenging, results-driven and invigorating for the mentors as it is for new teachers.

Mentoring provides new teachers with direct access to customized professional development, which ultimately improves new teachers' practice. However, mentors benefit significantly from this opportunity as well. Mentors who return to the classroom after working with new teachers for several years comment on the positive impact that mentoring has made in their own instruction and pedagogical knowledge. For others, mentoring is a pathway to leadership positions within the district, both in teaching leadership and administrative positions.

The NTC Philosophy of Mentoring

- ✓ Mentors are moral agents of change who uphold high standards and promote the learning of all students.
- ✓ The act of mentoring is an act of teaching and leading.
- ✓ Learning is at the heart of good mentoring.
- ✓ Becoming a mentor is a developmental process.
- ✓ Mentors contribute to the professionalism of teaching.
- ✓ Mentors thrive in a community of practice that both supports and challenges.

A Mentor's Curriculum

- ✓ Developing Productive and Supportive Relationships
- ✓ Using Professional Standards to Assess Practice and Set Professional Goals
- ✓ Using Formative Assessment Strategies to Accelerate Teacher Effectiveness
- ✓ Collecting and Analyzing Observation Data
- ✓ Using Student Work/Data to Guide and Differentiate Instruction
- ✓ Creating Learning Opportunities for Adults
- ✓ Mentoring for English Language Learner and Special Population Success
- ✓ Building Teacher Leadership Capacity and Skills



Tammy Phuong

Austin Independent School District

Austin, Texas

New Teacher Center in Partnership with the District Since: 2008

Participating Schools (2009-10): 14

Mentors (2009-10): 23

Mentees (2009-10): 225

Tammy Phuong taught at a private school for five years, but when her son transferred to the Austin Independent School District (AISD) in 2000, she began work as a science assistant at his school. The following year she started teaching first grade at a public elementary school in AISD and became a **new teacher** all over again.

She has vivid recollections of her first year at the new school. "It was a culture shock ... It was hard," she recalls. "It was a Title I school so 80 to 90 percent of our kids qualified as economically disadvantaged. I told my assistant principal, 'I know how to teach.' But even with five years experience, the behavior management challenges, large achievement gaps, and minimal home supports, are overwhelming. I have no idea how you keep first-year teachers."

Phuong's transition to the east side of Austin, with its large population of second language learners and students from low-income households, was difficult. But her situation is not unique.

Phuong did find her footing with the support of her principals and fellow teachers but, because she never forgot the overwhelming feeling of having to learn and understand that new environment, **supporting new teachers** became "a calling" for her in the eight years that followed. While teaching full-time, she spent an increasing amount of time reaching out to and supporting new teachers in her school. She also went on to receive her National Board Certification and documented the role of mentoring in developing new teachers.

Then, in 2008, Phuong saw a posting for a full-time **mentor** in the newly established partnership between the AISD and the New Teacher Center (NTC). She "pursued it diligently" and was one of 13 experienced teachers selected. The 2009-10 school year was her second year as a full-time mentor to 11 pre-K, first- and second-grade teachers at two Title I elementary schools on Austin's east side. More than 90 percent of the students in these schools are economically disadvantaged and more than 60 percent have limited English proficiency. Resignation rates of new teachers at these two schools had been considerably higher prior to the mentoring program.

Phuong's work is part of a district-wide program that provides three years of mentoring to all new teachers in 14 of Austin's high-need schools. The partnership with the NTC was created to curb the widespread resignation of teachers from these schools. Now in its third year, AISD has 23 full-time mentors. All are rigorously selected from the district's teaching ranks and each has signed up for a three-year appointment with an option of a one-time reassignment for another three years.

There are three reasons the appointments are neither longer nor permanent. One is to keep the mentors fresh and enthusiastic. A second is to ensure that good teachers are not permanently taken away from the classroom. And a third is the short-term stint outside of the classroom gives mentors the benefit of reflecting on their own **teaching practice** while building leadership skills. Phuong states, "I have learned from my mentees as much as I hope I have shared with them."

"You will never find a job more challenging or more rewarding. Teaching is for the resilient, the altruistic, the compassionate, the tolerant and the idealistic. We are the foundation to our students, to each other and to society."



Often, mentors return to their classroom invigorated by their experiences with new teachers and open to increased leadership responsibilities in their schools and districts.

Phuong is passionate about mentoring and sees it as a critical component in closing the achievement gap. She describes this connection between her work and student performance by saying, "Students in high-needs schools may have a novice teacher in consecutive grades due to teacher turnover. With this, research shows that student progress is significantly less compared to students with experienced, effective teachers. By the time students hit



third grade, the gap is almost insurmountable. Our work as mentors can act as an equalizer for schools, teachers and students.”

As a mentor and master teacher, Phuong supports and impacts the practice of novice teachers ensuring an effective learning environment. “I can accelerate a new teacher’s learning in those first three years so that it’s impacting students’ learning. I really think all first-year teachers in high-need schools should have mentors. I feel adamantly about it when I see the difference we make.”

Phuong spends most of her day in the classroom interacting with both teachers and students. She observes and co-teaches classes with her mentees as a partner in all their activities, interacting with the students. These classroom activities are supplemented by a 45-minute weekly meeting between Phuong and the mentee to plan out the week’s classroom activities, a session that combines curricular issues, student learning data, pedagogy, and the realities of each class and its students.

While some of Phuong’s time is spent on theory or hypotheticals, conversations primarily center on the immediate issues of the mentee’s classroom: which students are paired with each other and why, what intervention is required for a particular student, how the lesson was presented including what words and examples were used, how a specific question from a child was answered, whether a student’s family should be contacted, what approach was taken in response to a specific student’s behavior. “I know their students almost as well as they do. We routinely review data, discuss students’ needs, and observe classroom interactions, allowing me to provide insight if a child is falling behind.” She is there to “push the whole time.” Success



with this mixture of theory and practice would not be possible without Phuong's own classroom experience. But she readily admits that, "I definitely couldn't have mentored as effectively without New Teacher Center training." And while part of NTC's value is the professional development offered to AISD's mentors, an additional benefit stems from the Center's comprehensive suite of **formative assessment** tools — called the **Formative Assessment System**.

When asked what makes a good mentor, Phuong lists several qualities. One she cites is a deep understanding of young people and what is required for successful teaching; for example, understanding the developmental stages of learning in such areas as reading and writing. This includes a deep curricular knowledge and having "a wide range of experiences to pull from." A second quality of a good mentor is to have a chameleon-like versatility. "If you expect everyone to have your style and do it your way, you're not going to be effective. It's important to look at what the mentees' strengths and needs are specifically, including their learning style, professional goals, as well as entry points, and then be able to bring all that together." The final quality Phuong notes is the ability to balance the needs of both the beginning teacher and his or her students. "It is essential to build a trusting relationship with your mentee while keeping students' needs in mind because that's really why we are in education."

Ultimately, the goal for any mentor is to improve a beginning **teacher's practice** and in turn, impact student learning. Phuong says, "Reflecting on my first year and the support I was fortunate enough to have, my passion is now the success of our high-needs campuses. With mentoring I have the ability to impact a large number of students, now and for generations to come, through this powerful work with novice teachers."



Ryan Stewart

Ravenswood City School District
East Palo Alto, California

New Teacher Center in Partnership with the District Since: 2003

Participating Schools (2009-10): 8

Mentors (2009-10): 16

Mentees (2009-10): 65

Three years ago, Ryan Stewart was a mentee in the school where he now mentors others.

Immediately following college, he joined Teach for America and spent three years teaching eighth-grade algebra and physical science at Cesar Chavez Middle School in East Palo Alto, California. Based on his outstanding classroom work and his search for new challenges, the New Teacher Center recruited him to become a **mentor**.

He considers his relative youthfulness helpful to his **mentoring** but he also acknowledges its challenges. "I knew that coming into mentoring, I wasn't bringing 15, 20 years of classroom experience, like some of my colleagues. What I brought to the table, though, was really valued: how I look at data, how I've looked at making content accessible, knowing the ins and outs of what teachers in their first and second years right now are really struggling with."

Additionally, he believes that having been mentored in the same district in which he now mentors is valuable. "I know how this district operates and the things that you have to do to be successful

here with our students in our schools. I was able to add that. I think my teachers have really appreciated that I'm not too far removed from them."

For the last seven years, **new teachers** at Cesar Chavez Middle School and across the Ravenswood City School District (RCSD) have been a part of an intensive mentoring and **induction** program. The program — a tripartite effort from RCSD, New Teacher Center and the Hewlett Foundation — is based on the New Teacher Center's **Formative Assessment System** and focuses on reversing low student performance and high rates of teacher turnover. In addition to mentoring, it includes professional development in literacy, math and science, and peer support groups. The work of the mentees is designed to satisfy the state requirements for the second (and final) level of a professional teaching credential. (In California, participation in and successful completion of a two-year induction program is required of every new teacher in order for the teacher to receive what is often called a clear credential. This is required for teachers to be deemed "highly qualified" and for them to continue to be employed by a school district.)

Achieving all these goals is contingent on a number of factors but, according to Stewart and his colleagues, central to success is helping teachers become "reflective practitioners." As Stewart says, "You really have to be a reflective practitioner to make sure you're reaching your students and building the relationships that are going to make them trust you and learn from you."

Reflective practice refers to a teacher's ability to step outside himself or herself and objectively observe what is really going on in the class. This process starts with the mentor as outside observer and, over the course of the relationship, the mentees develop and use this objectivity to review their own work. Stewart says, "As an outside observer, I help them take a step back and see things not in the moment as they are when there are 30 things going on and things are flying across the room, but instead, they get to look from an objective perspective ... (and) can say, 'How did that really go? Did it really happen the way I wanted it to happen? What were my students saying? What were they doing? What's the evidence I have that they met today's objective?' Then in that objective mindset, they can (ask themselves), 'How can I do this better the next time? What is working really well for me that I want to build on? What are the strategic next steps I want to take to get where I'm going?' It's not something that they have to craft on their own. Rather, it gets to be one of those conversations where they can build from our shared experience."

Stewart and his mentees jointly develop an annual plan of self-assessment, **observation** and conferencing on student data, professional goals, and lesson planning. It is the mentor's job to help keep the new teachers on track. "Basically, as I'm observing, I'm just keeping little notes as to what

"We are always pushing our teachers to become leaders within their profession, to be proactive around responding ..."





I'm seeing the students doing, what I'm seeing the teacher doing, what I'm hearing from the students and the teacher, so when we go back, we can take a look through the data and pick out what the trends are," he says.

But to Stewart, mentoring is multilayered and he also constantly stresses a series of other issues including **classroom management**, particularly in the first year of teaching. As with mentors from other districts around the nation, he knows that this is a huge need for brand-new teachers and he devotes considerable time to helping mentees set up routines and conditions that encourage their success and the success of their students.

"We have to make sure that (mentoring) is not a checklist activity or that we don't boil it down to 'Did you meet with someone, and did you fill out these forms and so on?' Really, it must be an organic process that grows out of what the teachers need and what they're experiencing, and that it's very contextualized to their context."

"It's an environment where the routines that run your classroom are very solid, structured and orderly so that students have that safe space," he says. "It's not something that you can really just pick up from teacher preparation courses or watching a video. It's something that you have to learn on the job and you have to be a reflective practitioner to make sure you're reaching out to your students and building the relationships that are going to make them trust you and learn from you."

Building on strong classroom management skills, he also works to focus his mentees more intently on subject material.



“My first year was more around setting up structures, which really helped me. My second and third years were more about the actual day-to-day, taking this very complex subject matter ... and breaking it down for students who might be two or three years behind in grade level.”

An example of this is Stewart’s work to use the state tests to help inform subject matter teaching. Working as a member of a district-wide team, Stewart and colleagues from the same grade and subject area worked to align their day-to-day instruction with the state assessments. They examined the California Standards Test for Math in detail, found 82 specific sub-skills and built annual lesson plans around these. Stewart now works with his mentees to make “this a system that’s going to be most beneficial for students and sustainable for the teacher. How can we have regular feedback loops? How can we have good conversations around the data and make students more self-aware of where they are? How can we put in systems to make sure students who don’t master something get the support that they need until they master it?”

Stewart’s current workload is six math and science mentees in four middle schools. Of the six, three are first-year teachers, two are second-year and one is a third-year teacher. All are in schools where at least 90 percent of students are economically disadvantaged. In a typical week, he spends half his time with each teacher in observation and half in discussion and planning sessions. Though teachers are already pressed for time, Stewart says most are receptive to his support and the time commitment required of them.

“It is a significant time commitment, but I’ve found that the teachers have really, really appreciated it,” he says, adding that he works hard to ensure no time is wasted and that the sessions are highly relevant to his mentees. “We align (our sessions) with the goals that they set for themselves ... I think (mentors) really are seen as people who are going to be there to support the ongoing process that’s already there ... We haven’t been received as an add-on or extra burden, which has been great.”



Rebecca Costello

Berryessa Union School District

San Jose, California

New Teacher Center in Partnership with the District Since: 2000

Participating Schools (2009-10): 8

Mentors (2009-10): 4

Mentees (2009-10): 46

Editor's Note: The following presents an example of the kinds of topics covered in one 50-minute conversation between mentor and mentee. In this session, they made plans that would impact more than two weeks of instruction. After the session, E returned to her class while Costello left for her next working session with a different mentee and a new slate of topics.

Rebecca Costello is in her third year as a mentor in the Berryessa School District in San Jose, California. One of her mentees is E, a second year eighth-grade middle school science teacher.

On this Tuesday in late February, Costello arrives at E's classroom at 8:15 a.m. for the second of their two weekly 50-minute meetings. This conversation is fairly typical of their exchanges; it focuses on the events of the classroom. Costello explains that she says to her mentees, "Tell me what you're doing in the classroom and let's really talk about what's happening and how it's going to impact you as a teacher and your students. That's the important part."

Costello and E begin by discussing how best to use E's classroom tests to help guide her teaching. NTC stresses the importance of using data to make decisions about students, a part of



the **formative assessment** work that stands at the center of NTC's induction model. Costello's and E's conversation focuses on which classroom tests should be used to analyze student performance, when the tests should be administered, and how remediation plans should be developed for those students who do not do well.

The next topic is how E's homeroom and science class will be handled during an upcoming week's absence when E will undergo arthroscopic knee surgery. They review options on who will lead the class in her absence: how to secure a substitute who will excel at both subject matter and **classroom management**; which lessons should be given and which postponed (e.g., a decision is made to postpone the seltzer tablet-propelled rockets until her return); and, upon her return, how to rearrange the desks and tables to accommodate E and her crutches.

The third topic begins with Costello's query: How are the students behaving? E expresses concern that pupils may be talking too much during class (referring to them as "chatty Cathys"). Costello proposes various responses, including the use of "sign language" where students hold up fingers to designate answers, a technique that Costello successfully used in her own classes; E agrees to give the technique a try.

The two end by reviewing the lesson plans for the upcoming week, determining how to incorporate quizzes into lesson plans and deciding which experiments will take place and when. Because of E's upcoming surgery, they decide to reschedule the next **mentoring** session for the following week so they can maximize their time prior to the operation.

"Tell me what you're doing in the classroom and let's really talk about what's happening and how it's going to impact you as a teacher and your students.' That's the important part."



Leslie Baldacci

Chicago Public Schools

Chicago, Illinois

New Teacher Center in Partnership with the District Since: 2006

Participating Schools (2009-10): 374

Mentors (2009-10): 62

Mentees (2009-10): 1,081

Leslie Baldacci began her fight for educational equity outside the classroom. She was a journalist, not an educator, bringing knowledge and news to the public through her reporting. For 25 years, Baldacci fulfilled her dream, working at small and large news organizations in Michigan and Illinois. Then, 10 years ago, as she found her work increasingly focused on the Chicago Public Schools system, and especially as the mayor of Chicago took control of the system, she had an epiphany.

“I was on the editorial board at the *Chicago Sun-Times* and wrote some pretty stinging editorials about what the mayor ought to do,” she recounts. In researching her articles, she had come to believe that stable adults were one of the most important factors in a child’s life and mayoral control of the school system represented an important turning point in Chicago’s school reform. The time seemed right to move to the front lines of the educational battle. “I somehow mustered the humility to take my own advice.”

She enrolled in an alternative certification program at Roosevelt University and plunged into the Chicago Public Schools as a teacher. Yet, despite her years of covering the education beat and her recent certification program, Baldacci found herself underprepared for teaching. Her first class, with its 38 spirited seventh-graders, was a stunning reality check.



Baldacci vividly recalls her first year. “I experienced all the phases of the first-year teacher: anticipation, survival, disillusionment, and more isolation, perhaps, because I had been so used to being in touch with a lot of people, especially a lot of adults.” But despite the hurdles, Baldacci eventually did find a niche: She loved teaching social studies — it was “like running a news meeting every day” — and she began to build a “toolbox” of skills and practices in such areas as **classroom management** and responding to unruly student behaviors. She was gaining an insider perspective on the realities of teaching and beginning to feel that she was making a difference in the lives of her students.

In 2005, she left the classroom, “crying all the way,” to better support her family financially. During her first year away, she learned about a support network for **new teachers** that would eventually form the foundation for the Chicago office of the New Teacher Center (NTC). As NTC established its Chicago partnership in 2006, piloting a **mentoring** program in one community in Chicago’s South Side, Baldacci jumped at the chance to interview for a **mentor** position, with thoughts of gaining a different perspective within education, and more important, to return to the classroom and help new teachers ease through the difficult transition she had experienced. In 2007, she was hired as a mentor.

By 2009, NTC had expanded its partnership with Chicago Public Schools to include all schools in the district, providing nearly all first- and second-year teachers with a mentor. By her third year as a mentor, in the 2009-10 school year, Baldacci worked with 17 teachers in 11 schools, mostly in the Englewood section of Chicago’s South Side. Baldacci believes that it is in this kind of community — low-income with low-performing schools — in which dedicated and effective educators are the most needed.

In any given day, Baldacci may have individual 90-minute meetings with up to five elementary and middle school teachers, each at different schools. Then, in addition to these one-on-one meetings, Baldacci works with her teachers outside school hours by phone and e-mail communications on lesson planning and trouble-shooting. Through teacher **observation** and NTC’s **Formative Assessment System**, Baldacci captures her teacher’s performance in the classroom and helps teachers evaluate their own performance.

“I see them growing as teachers, and their dedication is so humbling. They all came to this because they want to be successful teachers.”

NTC’s tools are important to Baldacci. For example, the selective scripting tool is used to create written notes on the classroom dialogue during a given lesson. Baldacci explains, “It’s so basic that our teachers can usually look at my observation and say, ‘Oh, my gosh, what do you mean it



took me 15 minutes to do the intro? I notice when I look at this that I'm doing all the talking, and the kids aren't saying anything.' ... While [a teacher] is working intensely, going around the room, she's not able to see the full picture."

In addition to helping teachers better manage their classrooms and communicate with students and their families, Baldacci pushes her mentees to view the entire school and community as potential resources that can help them better understand their students' communities. "Who's the crossing guard? Is that somebody you see every day?" she will ask her teachers. "Is there a YMCA in the neighborhood? Where do the children go for after-school programs? Are you connected to the park district?" She believes it is only by looking within and outside the school community that teachers can truly understand the needs of their students and empower themselves to fill those needs.

Baldacci actively looks to expand her methods of advocating for students, teachers and communities. For example, she was working on a research project for the New Teacher Center in which she explored the supports that new teachers need when violence strikes their school community. This experience was prompted by a spate of violent student deaths in Chicago, near schools in which Leslie was mentoring. What she found was that the tools needed in these difficult situations extend beyond new teachers. "My research seems to be pointing to how it doesn't matter how long you have been [teaching]," Baldacci explains. "Nothing can really prepare you for the loss of a student and its continuing impact." One of her goals is to create a professional manual for teachers and administrators on dealing with grief and loss within a school community.



Baldacci also steps beyond her mentor role to advocate for her schools. When Guggenheim Elementary, where Baldacci works with two teachers, was slated to close at the end of the 2009-10 school year, Baldacci joined the school's students, teachers and administrators to protest at Operation PUSH. She supported and helped her social studies teacher use the school closing to develop her students' civic engagement skills as part of a civil rights unit. (Chicago Public Schools has since reversed the decision to close the school.)

For Baldacci, teaching is about increasing student learning while also creating life opportunities for students and entire communities. She views mentoring as a crucial step in retaining teachers, but also creating teachers who are well-prepared to act as educators, community liaisons and student advocates. Baldacci knows that her mentees are developing these qualities.

"I'm seeing many of them very comfortable stepping up to leadership roles early in their careers," she says. "A lot of our beginning teachers, our second-year teachers, are leading study groups in their schools. They are seeking out their colleagues to stay after school and gather around some professional readings or research solutions to problems that they're having or stepping up to be their grade level leaders. They are seeing opportunities to be proactive, and that's very, very exciting."

"I knew that there was a lot of professional development involved [at NTC], and if I positioned myself as a learner, I could be helpful as a mentor because my first two years were searing experiences. New teachers have a very special place in my heart. Those two years I remember in such clarity. It was life-changing in every way."



Amy Keys

Santa Cruz City Schools and Pajaro Valley Unified School District
Santa Cruz, California

New Teacher Center in Partnership with the Districts Since: 1998

Participating Schools (2009-10): 28

Mentors (2009-10): 16

Mentees (2009-10): 84

Editor's note: This is an e-mail written by Amy Keys, a mentor from Santa Cruz County, California. It was sent to those who interviewed her for this publication. It has been edited for length.

As I was reflecting on yesterday's activities, it occurred to me that one of the most important **mentoring** qualities for me is a sense of urgency about moving **teaching practice** forward. You asked me about the importance of the time spent in each meeting and the duration of the mentor-mentee collaboration. Two years may seem like a long time, but it isn't, really, to help shape all the elements of a teacher's practice — engaging students; creating an effective classroom environment; constantly assessing student understanding and developing and modifying curriculum and instruction in response to students' experience, interests and needs; finding and incorporating resources that deepen student engagement and understanding; developing units of lessons and individual lessons that are sequenced according to student development and understanding; communicating with families, communities, other colleagues, resource personnel; and somehow maintaining a balance between workload and the motivation

to keep teaching in the long term! I try to help my teachers in all of these areas, and while I try to focus our meetings, sometimes a teacher's growth area can be a moving target.

And one-and-a-half to two-hour meetings may seem like a long time, but I'm constantly aware that my mandate is to make that time productive. Frequently a teacher is in a situation of being overwhelmed or confused or frustrated, and they are grateful for the opportunity to "vent," but if I don't help them shift their emotional and mental states to hopeful, positive modes and come up with at least some concrete, substantive, tangible next steps, I've done little good. And they still have that massive stack of papers, or prickly kid, or confusing curriculum to go back to, and less time to deal with it. I'm an empathetic colleague, and I can relate to how hard the job is. But providing empathy is not my only charge. I have to help teachers improve their practice, to meet the needs of their students, and to recognize their own concept and vision that they have of themselves and as the teacher they always wanted to be. I want to help them reap the rewards of teaching and feel that sense of accomplishment, so they go back refreshed and ready to tackle their difficulties.

I need to help them develop some takeaway resources, steps, attitudes, habits of mind, responsiveness strategies that give them control and power and a sense of being able to excel in their job or they are going to experience the same frustrations tomorrow. If as a mentor all I've done is say, "There, there — this IS a tough job, this school is SO messed up, and these students ARE so impossible" — I've also conveyed the message that there is nothing in their power to change. New teachers are frequently working within schools facing huge systemic problems. But working within that reality, if I encourage my mentees to believe that the problems and the solutions lie entirely outside of them, I've contributed to a defeated, defeatist mindset that helps no one in schools. Someday, these new teachers might be working more broadly to change the system itself. But I don't let us off the hook for choosing how we respond to the challenges of teaching the students who fill our classrooms today. And new teachers, inspired by their own passion for their students' growth and for their subject matter — and surrounded by unrealistically heroic teacher fables in films and literature, may not initially realize how much patience is required for true progress, in students and in schools. I think it is really important to address, identify and understand the challenges of each particular school and student within it, and then, from that understanding, we get down to work. So I guess that's why a meeting can take a long time, depending on a teacher's state at a given time.

In any case, it was great seeing you both! Have a terrific trip back.

Late for my run!

Amy



"I think that the New Teacher Center is a really good example of how you can teach classroom management on the job."



Frank Pantano

Boston Public Schools

Boston, Massachusetts

New Teacher Center in Partnership with the District Since: 2005

Participating Schools (2009-10): 77

Mentors (2009-10): 9 Full-time and 50 Part-time ("part-time" refers to full-time teachers who receive release time to meet with their mentees)

Mentees (2009-10): 172

Two years ago Frank Pantano became a full-time **mentor** so that his 33 years of experience can be passed along to his fellow teachers in the Boston Public Schools system. During his career, which began in 1977 as a special education teacher at Roxbury High School, he has taught five subjects (special education, bilingual special education, health, English and Spanish) in seven schools.

Pantano had the chance to leave the classroom on many previous occasions but always opted to stay. As he tells it, "Every year a headmaster would say, 'Let's sit and talk about next year. We think you should maybe move on to an assistant program director or take on more of an administrative role.' Then, in an interview session, we'd get to the question, 'Why do you want to do this?' and I couldn't honestly answer ... I always liked the structure of the classroom ... I enjoyed the kids and watching them learn. I loved summer vacation, and moreover, didn't want to have to deal with the politics of administrative work. I felt that administrators were always caught in a no-win situation between the central administration, the parents, the teachers and the students."



But all this changed in 2006 when he was teaching two inclusion classes (classes in which students with a range of special needs are fully included in a regular classroom) in freshman and sophomore English at the newly formed Boston Community Leadership Academy. “This was the year that six new teachers were hired — six brand-new teachers. Overall, there were probably 10 teachers who were new to the building. [The principal] saw there was a need (for mentoring) ... She wanted somebody in-house to mentor and help this group of first-year teachers along in order to smooth their transition.” Based on his more than three decades of experience, she asked whether he would take on

this responsibility.

It was “the push that I needed.” He accepted the new challenge and for the remainder of that year carried those **mentoring** duties in addition to a half-time teaching caseload. The next year, he continued mentoring while teaching full-time. The year after, Pantano applied to become a full-time mentor. He explains the late career change by saying, “I saw that behind me there were too many teachers with only a few years of experience, but relatively few in my position as seasoned teachers ... I began to think of my former colleagues who mentored me over the years on a voluntary basis, just through the collegial atmosphere in the building. However, today we need to look at mentoring as a systematic practice. We need to institutionalize it to retain the best teachers by helping them to improve their practice and maximize student achievement.”

His current mentoring work is the result of the partnership between Boston Public Schools and the Boston Plan for Excellence, a local education foundation and partner in reform, that led to an overhaul of Boston’s approach to hiring and retaining effective teachers. In 2005 Boston established the New Teacher Development Program. This uses both full- and part-time mentors to provide instructional support to nearly 100 percent of new teachers across the city. Since the program’s inception, the New Teacher Center has partnered with Boston Public Schools on the program design, implementation and mentor professional development.

In the 2009-10 school year, Pantano mentored 15 first-year teachers from six widely differing kinds of schools. Two are “turnaround schools” (poor performing schools) serving predominantly immigrant and low-income students; one is a school for students expelled from other schools; two are schools for students with emotional and behavioral problems; and one is a charter school with selective admissions. The teacher subject areas also differ. Over the years they have included bilingual history, biology, chemistry, English, math, Spanish, and special education for emotionally disturbed and multihandicapped students.

In terms of mentoring those from other disciplines, particularly the sciences, where he has limited personal knowledge of the curriculum, Pantano points out that “most of these teachers are career changers, so they’ve worked in the field beforehand, and they know their content. We work more on pedagogy.” But he also adds that “I tell them [math and science teachers] that if I can’t understand the lesson, then the kids probably can’t understand the lesson,” he says, adding that he suggests to these struggling teachers that they use him as a sort of practice student.

Pantano sees each mentee twice a week, once to observe their classes and once to review the **observation**, discuss issues that the teacher might bring up, and plan future classes. His guiding principle is that “a good mentor is somebody who can listen; somebody who is an advocate for the teacher within the school, within the system; somebody who has or can access resources and experience.”



Based on his years working with and observing colleagues, Pantano knows that each one — because of his or her background, training, school assignment, subject area — has different strengths and weaknesses. Using his vast experience, he tailors his work to their individual needs.

But his 30-plus years have also taught Pantano that good teachers require a fixed set of skills to be successful and that they also share certain initial areas of weakness. For example, he says, "... The most common aspect or area where people have difficulty is in **classroom management**. ..." So he emphasizes how preparation and consistency can make a world of difference to a young teacher and his or her students. "Kids need to know what to expect ... if you're not organized, if you don't know your curriculum very well, you don't plan for the time you have, then you're going to have management problems."

Pantano also stresses that effective teaching requires teamwork. New teachers should not and cannot work in isolation from other teachers; they need to marshal the resources within their own buildings and among colleagues through collaboration with principals, teachers and district administrators. He tells his mentees, "You have to know the people who are going to support you." And he reminds new teachers that school administrators and department heads can be powerful allies and sources of support.

Despite the success of Boston's mentoring program, Pantano believes there is always room for improvement and makes four very specific recommendations. He would expand mandatory mentoring from one to three years; widen the effort to include teachers new to the Boston Public Schools system in addition to those who are new to the profession; involve the entire instructional leadership team, the principal and the guidance counselor in schools with hard-to-serve populations; and develop national standards for mentoring to ensure consistency and effectiveness among schools and school districts.

Overall, however, Pantano has seen the impact of the current program firsthand.

"I have had a number of second-year teachers say to me — even first-year teachers, 'I would never have made it this far if there wasn't this program,'" he says.

A Day in the Life of Frank Pantano: In a single day, Pantano encounters many issues in many circumstances. The common thread is his use of observation, discussion and feedback, all tailored to the mentees' specific needs. Following is a short description of the kinds of circumstances he sees every day.



8:30–9:10 a.m., English High School:

Sophomore U.S. history for English Language Learners. Today's lesson focuses on the Great Depression. Pantano works with mentee and small groups of students as they develop PowerPoint presentations to be made to fellow students later in the day. Each group is charged with describing and giving examples of terms and events including "boom-bust cycles," "personal responsibility," "depression" and "current recession."

9:10–9:30 a.m., English High School: Sophomore U.S. History for English Language Learners (same mentee, different class). Today's lesson focuses on the presidency of Andrew Jackson. Pantano observes mentee give and explain to her second-period class their assignment, how students are responding, and which students are answering as he fills out a **Collaborative Assessment Log** (part of NTC's Formative Assessment Tools). Once the group work starts, Pantano observes the students working and reinforces the teacher's lesson.

9:30–9:50 a.m., English High School: Senior English class. Today's lesson is on "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost. Pantano observes mentee to gather additional information for an appointment he will continue later in the day.

10:15–11:15 a.m., Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers: Senior English class. Today's lesson focuses on *Hamlet*. Pantano observes lesson and records in Collaborative Assessment Log. Once the class breaks into small groups, he works with various students advising them on their projects. During the lunch hour, he and the mentee spend 20 minutes reviewing student reaction to the class, how it can be improved and follow-up activities.

"... the more reflective you are as a teacher, the better you are because you cannot only look at your practices from within but you're willing to listen to other people and let them help guide you."

11:25 a.m.–1:45 p.m., McKinley Middle School (serves students who are emotionally disturbed and/or have behavior problems). Pantano meets with mentee to review the day's lesson and progress of individual students (30 minutes). Helps mentee with her class, working directly with students (65 minutes). Meets with teacher to review her work, student reaction and future lesson plans (30 minutes).

2:15–3:30 p.m., English High School: One-on-one meeting with mentee (class he observed at 9:10 a.m.) to review the morning's presentation and student reaction, advise on upcoming lessons, provide resources, and discuss plans and performance of individual students.



Alyson Mike/Rolland Karlin

Nationwide Online Mentoring Program

Montana

New Teacher Center in Partnership with the District Since: N/A

Participating Schools (2009-10): 100+ Districts across the U.S.

Mentors (2009-10): Math: 16, Science: 56, Special Education: 25

Mentees (2009-10): Math: 131, Science: 313, Special Education: 68

Alyson Mike

Alyson Mike is the current director of Online Professional Development at the New Teacher Center. But Mike never intended to be a teacher much less help **mentor** teachers.

Growing up in Montana, she originally planned to be a veterinarian or to go into the biomedical field. But immediately after college, she accepted a job as a teaching assistant for a biology class for nursing students, “absolutely loved it,” and the rest began to fall into place.

“I changed directions completely. I went back and got my teaching certificate and never looked back,” she says.

Mike then spent 20 years as a teacher, two in eastern Montana in high school biology, chemistry and physics and another 18 years in eighth-grade science.



Today she uses many of those classroom skills to reach out to **new teachers** across the country. Mike is responsible for creating and setting up electronic **mentoring** programs for the New Teacher Center.

Originally begun in 2002 as a partnership between the Science Math Resource Center at Montana State University, the National Science Teachers Association and the New Teacher Center with a grant from the National Science Foundation, the e-mentoring she now leads was conceived to provide mentoring services to rural areas where teachers and schools were often far apart. But Mike explains that this was soon expanded to help “beginning teachers who were not being served simply because of the lack of mentors in the available area,” a problem in both rural and urban schools.

“Your growth as a teacher should be ongoing throughout your whole professional career.”

Today Mike oversees 100 mentors from around the nation, who provide distance mentoring in math, science, and, beginning in the 2009-2010 school year, special education. They mentor 500 beginning teachers from all 50 states. Mentors must successfully complete a three-week online professional development course to be placed in a pool of available mentors. Beginning math, science and special education teachers are then matched with a mentor based on similar teaching assignments and grade level.

The e-mentoring program is divided into four major components, all of which take place online and work to build communities of practice across groups of new teachers and mentors. The first is called Our Place, a private discussion area where new teachers engage their mentor in one-on-one conversations about teaching practice. The second is Mentor Place, a facilitated space for mentors to examine best mentoring practices with other online mentors. The third, Inquiries, helps new teachers, with the support of mentors, focus on specific teaching practices or content over an eight-week period based on a new teacher’s unique questions and teaching situation.

Finally, the Community Forums allow participants to connect with others teaching similar content, giving teachers and mentors access to content-specific teaching ideas and responses from content facilitators, content specialists and other teachers. It provides an opportunity for mentors and new teachers to investigate strategies to specific challenges that arise in the classroom.

While the NTC e-mentoring model does not include face-to-face interactions, Mike believes it offers distinct benefits for new teachers and mentors. For example, the virtual format ensures flexibility and focus. Because this method allows teachers to sign on when it's convenient for them, e-mentoring encourages more interaction. It is expected that e-mentors be in contact with their mentees at least three times per week. On average, mentees log on multiple times a week.

"It's concentrated. It's focused short bursts of time. There's a lot of power in that," Mike says. Another advantage of e-mentoring is that beginning teachers can be linked to mentors from around the country who teach the same grade level and subjects, creating a powerful **professional learning community** and experience, particularly important because mastery of content knowledge and effective **teaching practices** are critical to student learning.

Mike also is careful to point out that digital communication is now a common method of communication for many. "Our younger teachers just embrace this. They're digital natives. They've grown up with this. They Facebook. They MySpace. They IM (instant message). They chat. This is how they communicate with their peers, so this isn't out of their realm and they feel very comfortable with it."

"There's the opportunity to network with other professionals. We have high-quality resources. We actually have university professors and scientists on our site, so they have content expertise that's available 24/7 as well."

But challenges do exist. This kind of community, like any other, still requires nurturing and constant attention. "What we learned in the initial years of the program is that just because you build this great, fabulous electronic environment, people don't necessarily come to it unless you facilitate and keep conversations moving. ... Just because you have this thing doesn't mean good conversations are going to happen," Mike explains.

As a result, the program has created "facilitators" to help keep the conversations flowing by reading, monitoring and summarizing discussions. Mentors who are assigned mentees are then assigned a facilitator who monitors online engagement on a weekly basis for timeliness, quality and quantity. Facilitators' own work is monitored by facilitator coordinators.

"We work really hard in developing a relationship online and building that trusting relationship. I think you'll find sometimes that the relationship online might be even a little stronger than the face-to-face," Mike says. "Simply because of the fact that I know I'm never going to see you ... I can unload. I can share my concerns. I can vent."

But of equal importance, Mike says, "We have a tremendous amount of research on our program that identifies the benefits as far as beginning teachers feeling more prepared to teach challenging curriculum, beginning teachers feeling more prepared for **classroom management**. They feel better prepared to teach different types of curriculum or higher-level curriculum, and they know they have the resources."



Rolland Karlin

Rolland Karlin is nationally recognized for his work as a fifth-grade science teacher. His many honors include the National Science Foundation's 1999 Presidential Award for excellence in teaching and the Montana State Science Olympiads. In fact, in 24 years, Rolland has won 16 State Olympiad championships, six second places, and two third places — in other words, he has always gone home with a trophy. As his colleague Alyson Mike says, "That man has won more Science Olympiads — I mean, it's just sort of known in Montana, Rolland's team will win the middle school division. He's known all over the country because of the fact that he has built a community of learners and of kids who are saying, 'We want to do Science Olympiad with Mr. Karlin because you get to learn science.'"

And while his students at Big Timber Grade School in Big Timber, Montana — where he's taught for the last 32 years — are the primary beneficiaries of Karlin's expertise, other teachers, specifically, new teachers, now also can take advantage of Karlin's skills and experience.

In addition to his full-time teaching job, for the last 15 years, Karlin has spent 10 to 12 hours every week mentoring young teachers. Part of his motivation for this extra work comes from his own memories of being a young teacher. "I look back at those first few years, and that's what got me into mentoring ... I feel sorry for those poor kids I taught," he says.

For the last eight years, he has worked with the New Teacher Center e-mentoring program. In the 2009-10 school year, he had four mentees, all first to third-year elementary or middle school science teachers, one each in California, Georgia, Oregon and Washington, D.C.

His underlying philosophy in dealing with young teachers is the same one that guides his work with students in his classroom: Build on their strengths. “Something I’ve done my whole career is to try to catch people doing something right. They’re in there; they’re putting in their time; they’re working hard; they’re doing evenings; they’re doing weekends; and that alone is doing something right, and they’re learning ... Catch them doing something right and they’re going to want to try harder, work harder, learn more, and I think that just leads to success.”

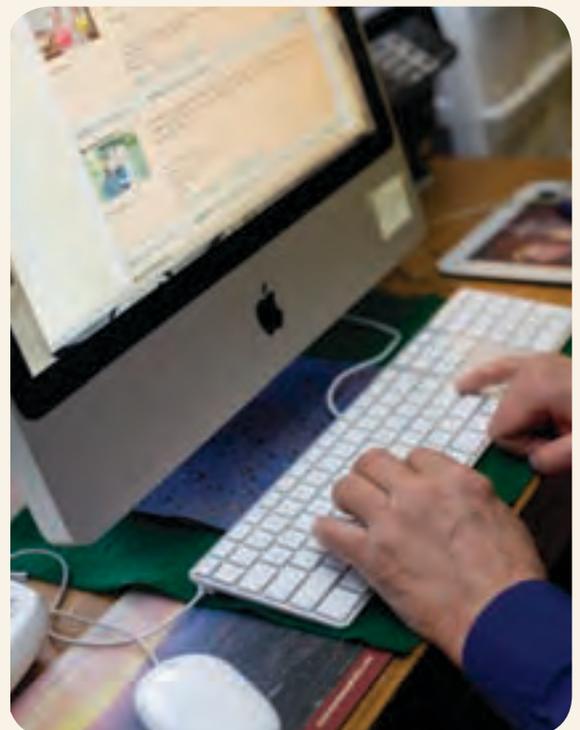
“Mentoring is great for me. These new teachers are coming out of college. They’re young. They’re energetic. They have great ideas and just listening to them helps me improve my teaching.”

His years of teaching, mentoring and observing colleagues have given Karlin insight into common issues faced by most new teachers, and he is particularly careful to work with them in these areas. For example, during their first months, he believes that mentees frequently face two major issues: time management — how to fit in all the paperwork, homework correction, assessments and daily class activities — and lesson development — how best to design and present material clearly and develop assessments along the way to find out where each student stands.

But identifying and implementing behaviors alone does not make a good mentor. Good mentoring also requires developing strong underpinnings including trust and judgment. Karlin, who often uses the phone-to-video application Skype to communicate face-to-face, says, “The first few weeks or few months are basically spent getting to know one another and building trust, which is very important.”

Once trust has been established, Karlin then teaches his mentees to rely on their own knowledge and judgment. “The types of questions we’re going to be asking our mentees are really leading them to reflect and to come up with their solution to the problem instead of us just saying ‘Well, do this, this works.’”

Another critical factor in good mentoring is staying in touch with mentees who, themselves, are often very busy. One way to do this is to communicate through as many channels as possible using all parts of the e-mentoring system. Karlin is an active participant in *Dilemmas* (a part of Community Forums), the two-to-three-week open-ended scenarios that pose challenges, like how to deal with students who miss many classes. For the first week, the mentees respond and, for the second week, the mentors join in. He is also active in the *Topic of the Month* (a part of Community Forums), a facilitated and structured discussion that offers the new teacher an opportunity to examine teaching practices, and *Coffee Break*, which is an informal digital meeting space for teachers to discuss creative practices across the gamut. It was here that Karlin told others of his practice of granting a day’s extension on homework





assignments to those who submitted five creative excuses for their tardiness.

While Karlin believes that mentoring generally is critical to teacher and student success, he has come to really appreciate e-mentoring because of the wide network it creates for both teachers and their mentors.

“There’s a whole network of mentors out there, and if I have a problem addressing an issue that one of my mentees has, I just have to go to Mentor Place and I’m in touch with hundreds of other experienced teachers who would help me out,” he says.

Expert that he is, even Karlin occasionally gets stumped for an answer.

“There are mentors all over the country. Sometimes a mentee asks me a question that I don’t know the answer to. Then I ask that question of the other mentors, and they’re all very helpful,” he says. “The mentors are all constantly posting. We have places where we can address questions about physics, life science, earth science and chemistry. There’s a facilitator who’s an expert in each one of those fields, so if a question is over our heads, we have a place to go to get some information on that. It’s a valuable resource.”

Karlin’s work is only partly driven by his desire to help mentees. As he says, “Mentoring is a two-way street. Mentors learn much from their mentees. There are new ideas, questions that help mentors solve problems. It leads us to think about our teaching and helps us to become better teachers. It gives us an opportunity to share the benefits of years of experience with our mentees to possibly guide them, give them a leg up and smooth out some of the bumps along the way.”

Rolland Karlin

Subject: Re: Not enough time

Feb 24, 2010 11:33 AM

Hi all,

Yes, time is the major issue for most mentees. Time for me this time of year is a balancing act. What I have to do is set priorities. I always check "Our Place," and sometimes that is all I get to that particular day because I'm trying some new ways to teach inquiry that is out of my comfort zone. I'm trying to include more **formative assessments** (during) as opposed to summative (after). It is exciting and makes me reflect more. My students seem to like the changes, but it is something they are not used to, so lessons seem to proceed at a slower pace.

What time-saving tips do you use that might help other teachers make better use of the time they have?

I use peer review to get useful information back to the students quickly. It also helps me find out what the students know and can be able to do before a lesson/unit is over so I can address any misconceptions.

Rolland

5th-Grade Self-contained teacher/ Middle School Science Olympiad Coach / District Science Coordinator / MSTA Board Member Big Timber, MT Science mentor

Malissa Summers

Subject: Re: Not enough time

Feb 24, 2010 5:42 PM

Time is a MAJOR issue for me also. I find my stack of ungraded papers getting higher and higher. I've got to find the time to grade some papers. I would like to let my students grade some assignments. However, I'm not sure if they will grade the papers honestly. Any tips?

Teachers ... Touching Lives One Student at a Time!
Malissa Summers, M.Ed.
NSTA Mentee

Paula Borstel

Subject: Re: Not enough time

Feb 25, 2010 9:56 PM

Time is something I need more of. By the time I get home after lacrosse practice, I'm just dead. Thankfully, I didn't have much to grade ... unfortunately, the trimester ends in 2 weeks and I have 2 assignments I really want the kids to do ... it just means I have to grade them. Luckily, one is a pretty simple rubric. Either the item is on the poster or it isn't ... count 20 items, they are good!

I am thinking about having the assignment due the beginning of the new trimester, even though we should be in the next chapter ... that would save me from having to grade 150 items when grades are due AND right before I go to Philly.

Malissa, funny you should ask about honesty. Last year with my advanced kids, the kids complained to the principal that other kids COULD cheat (I really never actually caught anyone, it looked pretty good on the face.) This year, no one has complained, and I have caught a few people getting better grades than the person deserved, but they were REALLY easy to spot. However, when I threaten to not only give the person getting the "better" grade and the person grading an F for cheating, it really put a crimp in it.

I do have the kids grade quizzes, as it helps reinforce the material. I am thinking I might have more formative quizzes, just for that reason. I had 2 quizzes this last chapter, and the response about the test today was that it was easy. There you have it ... we'll see if it also is true next chapter.

Paula Borstel 8th-Grade Physical Science
Miraleste Intermediate School Rancho Palos Verdes, Ca Mentee

Rolland Karlin

Subject: Re: Not enough time

Feb 26, 2010 7:06 AM

Malissa,

Great question.

When I have peers correct quizzes and assignments that have answers that are cut and dried, I always allow the students to question the peer corrected papers. I ask if there is anything they disagree with and when they do, I'm the final judge. This encourages the students to look over their papers after they have been corrected and before they are entered in the grade book.

There are positive effects of peer correcting. Paula mentioned one of them. "I do have the kids grade quizzes, as it helps reinforce the material. I am thinking I might have more formative quizzes, just for that reason. I had 2 quizzes this last chapter, and the response about the test today was that it was easy. There you have it ... we'll see if it also is true next chapter."

5th-Grade Self-contained teacher/ Middle School Science Olympiad Coach / District Science Coordinator /
MSTA Board Member Big Timber, MT Science mentor



Kristin Walker

Durham, North Carolina

New Teacher Center in Partnership with the District Since: 2005

Participating Schools (2009-10): 52

Mentors (2009-10): 18 full-time and 2 part-time

Mentees (2009-10): 530

Kristin Walker comes from a long line of teachers and has always been attracted to the profession because of its important role in society. After teaching in New York and California, Walker settled in Durham, North Carolina, where she taught fifth-grade for six years. As Walker scaled the learning curve of the teaching profession, she noticed challenges that **new teachers** around her perennially faced.

One particular interaction with a beginning teacher stands out for Walker. A brand-new teacher, who had joined Walker's fifth-grade team of teachers, regularly raised ideas about classroom practices. As the new teacher's confidence in trying new classroom tactics waned due to her colleagues' lack of enthusiasm, Walker stopped by her classroom and encouraged her to pilot those ideas.

"She just opened up," Walker remembers. "I was glad to be there for her, and it just gave me the feeling that I'd really like to work with other teachers, because I think there are a lot of teachers like her who are being shut down ..."



At the same time Walker discovered her interest in supporting new teachers, so, too, did her school district. Durham Public Schools (DPS) is an urban district with two-thirds of the student population eligible for free or reduced lunch and 71 percent are African American or Hispanic. A teacher **induction** program in partnership with the New Teacher Center (NTC) was established in 2005, which provided all beginning teachers in the district **mentor** support. In the first three years of the partnership, the district's beginning teacher turnover rate decreased by half, from an annual attrition rate of 28 percent to 14 percent (in 2007-08).

Walker became interested and applied to become a full-time mentor in Durham's new program. Her development as a mentor was ensured through her participation in the New Teacher Center's mentor academy series, a three-year professional development course for mentors in which they learn and master the knowledge and skills of instructional mentoring. The academies introduced Walker to the NTC's **formative assessment tools** and protocols that guide conversations with new teachers and monitor their progress by assessing student learning, planning lessons, and collecting and examining classroom data focused on teaching and learning. Walker says, "It's really in-depth training and if you ask the group, it would probably be unanimous that it's the best training we've ever received as teachers."

Four years later, in the 2009-10 school year, Walker mentored 11 new teachers at Burton Elementary, a Title I elementary magnet school with an international baccalaureate and foreign language focus. With 353 students, Burton Elementary serves a mostly African American and Latino population and offers students small class sizes and the option of taking Spanish, French or Chinese from kindergarten through fifth grade.

"If the job was just helping the teachers and it didn't go beyond that, it would still be rewarding, but I probably couldn't feel as passionate about advocating for it as I do ... I really feel that it's having a direct impact on student learning."

Walker's day is scheduled around one-on-one meetings, classroom **observations** and research to help her mentees find new teaching resources. She spends a significant portion of her time in mentee classrooms, observing their practice, assessing student engagement and evidence of student learning, and preparing her conversations with new teachers to ensure their time together is focused and relevant to the teachers' needs. With so much time spent in her new teachers' classrooms, Walker gets to know the students in her new teacher classrooms and the challenges they face. "There have been years where I knew the names of every single child in my teachers' classrooms. When you're in there, you learn their names and their strengths and weaknesses. You get to really know the kids." She uses her classroom **observations** and formative assessment tools to help new teachers tailor their instruction and develop appropriate interventions for students.

Walker points out that while she offers emotional support to her mentees, her job is not one of a therapist. It's hard, however, to separate the support aspect of **mentoring** from the coaching components, especially when teachers feel overwhelmed with challenges in their classroom or school. "It's really easy, especially since we've all been teachers ... to empathize to the point



where we're getting mired in what's going wrong and things we can't control, so we talk a lot, even at our professional developments. How do we get a teacher to move to the next step?"

The professional development Walker has received coupled with her nine years of teaching has helped her identify trends in new teachers' stages of development. For example, with first-year teachers, Walker stresses the importance of developing a classroom strategy for managing students. Once **classroom management** is in order, she is able to support new teachers in achieving higher levels of instructional effectiveness and encourage them to foster and implement their creative ideas.

Though Walker is responsible for providing intensive instructional support to her assigned beginning teachers, she is part of a larger community of teacher mentors within DPS and she calls upon them frequently to get new ideas to help her teachers improve practice. The support of colleagues, especially when working with teachers outside her content area, is a huge advantage. The network of mentors in DPS brings accountability, and more important, community, to her work. "We're the only [mentor] in our building in most cases, so it becomes kind of an isolating experience," she says. "We joke that if you send a question out to the mentor group, we just say 'Duck!' because you're going to get 5,000 responses. ... We've really been able to form an effective **professional learning community** with one another." This community of mentors has encouraged Walker to consider her role within the broader district and has fortified her abilities to engage veteran teachers and school principals in supporting new teachers.

Walker's ultimate goal is to help the new teachers become more **reflective** about their teaching skills and the needs of their students. If this does not happen, then teachers are not developing the high-quality teaching skills they need to affect student achievement. She explains, "I think that's what everyone would agree is really the endgame here."



Walker feels intense pride when she sees her mentees move into leadership roles, sometimes while she is coaching them in their second or third year. She enjoys being in a role where she can encourage them to tackle national board certifications or mentorship. “There are lots of opportunities for us to talk to them about leadership once they’ve advanced beyond keeping their head above water.”

Mentoring has also inspired Walker to step into a new leadership role of her own — becoming a school principal. She credits mentoring with broadening her view of the teaching profession and the education sector. “I think from just being in my classroom, I didn’t have that vantage point, so I didn’t see all this great work being done around education toward making teaching the respected profession that it needs to be.” In fact, coaching new teachers helped Walker envision school administration as the next step in her career progression. Mentoring taught her how to facilitate teachers and groups through difficult conversations. She now is currently enrolled in a graduate program to obtain her Master’s in School Administration through the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill and anticipates using much of what she’s learned as a mentor in a future school leadership role.

“[Mentoring] fosters professionalism in the teaching profession as a whole. I think it’s really important that we think more about what we do as teachers. I’m impressed with how the New Teacher Center is always thinking about how we can make teachers and teacher induction better.”

“I look forward to using what I’ve gotten from mentoring, and if it hadn’t been for mentoring I never would be doing this,” Walker says. “I really think that’s going to be a large part of who I am as an administrator. I hope it is a large part of who I am.”

The College Board

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New Teacher Center

The New Teacher Center (NTC) is dedicated to improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers. By offering extensive and targeted support to new teachers, through carefully crafted programs of training and mentoring, NTC works to vastly improve the overall effectiveness of the teaching profession, and to retain and sustain great teachers, especially in the country's hardest-to-serve schools. NTC works nationally, at state and district levels, to address the needs of new teachers. With an \$18 million annual budget, NTC provides service in all 50 states and operates directly in 35 and more than 200 public school districts, supporting more than 26,000 new teachers. For more information, visit www.newteachercenter.org.

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