

# NTC Research Abstracts

JANUARY 2006

ISSUE #06-01

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# Introduction: Research at the New Teacher Center, University of California, Santa Cruz

The New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz is dedicated to promoting excellence in induction. The NTC research division conducts original research studies, evaluation studies, secondary analyses of existing data, and contract research for collaborating institutions.

Research at the New Teacher Center explores three areas of inquiry:

- Beginning teacher professional lives and development
- Induction contexts for beginning teacher learning (mentoring relationships, induction programs, classrooms, schools, districts, state, colleague and administrator relationships)
- Impact of induction support (effects on students, teachers, administrators, classrooms, schools, districts, profession)

The central research questions include:

- What are the effects of mentoring on new teacher development, practice, and retention?
- How does new teacher support affect student achievement?
- What do mentors need to know and how do they conduct their work?
- What are the policy and economic considerations of induction support for new teachers?
- How do different induction contexts and mentoring conditions affect the professional development of educators?

Our researchers publish and present their findings in:

- Refereed research journals: *American Educational Research Journal*, *Harvard Educational Review*, *Teachers College Record*, *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *The New Educator*, *Mentoring and Tutoring*, *Journal of Educational Change*
- Educational publications: *EdWeek*, *Educational Leadership*
- Conferences of national and international organizations: American Educational Research Association, Association of Teacher Educators, California Council for Teacher Educators, International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching, European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
- NTC Working Papers, NTC Research Briefs
- Network of Researchers on Teacher Induction (NORTI): an online resource accessed through the NTC website—[www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org). Reports, draft papers, and finished research papers related to many of the above-mentioned studies are available for download

## Part 1: Effects of Induction

### *Student Achievement*

#### **An Investigation of the Effects of Variations in Mentor-Based Induction on the Performance of Students in California** (2005)

*Stephen Fletcher, Michael Strong, and Anthony Villar*

Policymakers are concerned about teacher shortages and the high rate of attrition among new teachers. Mentor-based induction has been shown to reduce the numbers of new teachers leaving schools or the profession. Staying in the profession and being happy in the classroom, though, do not mean new teachers are effective in helping students learn. As California requires districts to have a two-year induction program, but does not specify program characteristics, three districts were recruited and agreed to participate in a study about the effectiveness of induction programs using student achievement data. Each program was defined in terms of the number of new teachers assigned to a mentor. The mentor-novice ratio was seen as a critical program characteristic because it reflected how much time a mentor could work with a novice, the quality of the mentors selected, and the potential time for mentor professional development. Using advanced statistical techniques, we analyzed student achievement data in terms of individual student characteristics and program factors. The results indicate that mentor-based induction is associated with positive gains in student achievement if mentor selectivity is high, mentors have the opportunity for professional development, and mentors meet with new teachers on a regular basis.

*Draft available at [www.newteachercenter.org/norti](http://www.newteachercenter.org/norti)*

## **An Investigation of the Effects of Teacher Experience and Teacher Preparedness on the Performance of Latino Students in California** (2003)

Berkeley, CA: Language Minority Research Institute

*Michael Strong and Stephen Fletcher*

In order to examine the effects of induction of new teachers on the achievement of minority students we posed the following questions:

1) What is the distribution of minority students in California by school according to the percentage of beginning teachers?

The data from the state and the district level indicate that new teachers struggling to adapt to the challenges of the job are dealing with more minority students, more English Language Learners and more students from a poor background than their senior colleagues.

2) When SES level is controlled, is there a difference between the school-level API scores of minority students in schools based on the percentage of beginning teachers on the faculty?

Controlling for the percentage of poor students within a school, we found that schools with low percentages of new teachers tended to have more growth in their API scores for Latino students than schools with high percentages of new teachers. This finding occurred regardless of level of experience of non-novice faculty.

3) How do the SAT/9 gain scores of the Latino students of beginning teachers in an intensive mentoring program compare to those of beginning teachers not in a mentoring program?

In terms of yearly achievement scores, students taught by induction participants have lower SAT/9 scores than students taught by veteran teachers. This result is probably explained by new teachers in this district working with a higher percentage of English Language Learners than do veteran teachers. With regard to gain scores, however, students taught by novices had greater gains than those taught by veterans.

*Draft available at [www.newteachercenter.org/norti](http://www.newteachercenter.org/norti)*

## Does New Teacher Support Affect Student Achievement? Some Early Research Findings

*Research Brief #06-01, New Teacher Center @ UC Santa Cruz*

*Michael Strong*

This report, the second in the Research Brief series from the NTC, discusses investigations into the possible relation between new teacher induction support and student achievement. It is suggested that teacher induction support may play an important role in determining teacher quality, which, in turn, has an effect on student outcomes. The report discusses the fact that no published research addresses this question, attributing this lack to the difficulty of obtaining necessary data, the variability of support programs, the unevenness of achievement testing schedules, and the many other variables that may influence student achievement that need to be controlled. After reviewing a couple of studies by other researchers that have not appeared in refereed journals, the report summarizes two studies conducted at the New Teacher Center. The first of these compares student achievement among classes taught by new teachers in three different districts. The district that supported new teachers for two years with a full-release mentor posted more classes with reading gains than the two districts who reduced support in the second year. In the second study, student achievement among new teachers who received two years of mentoring was compared with that of experienced teachers. No significant difference was found, suggesting that comprehensive support may have an effect on student achievement.

*Brief available at [www.newteachercenter.org/research.php](http://www.newteachercenter.org/research.php)*

## *Retention*

### **Induction, Mentoring and Teacher Retention: A Summary of the Research (2005)**

*The New Educator, 1(3), 181–198*

*Michael Strong*

This paper reviews the research literature on new teacher mentoring as it relates to teacher retention. The review is divided into three parts. The first part looks at issues of definition, distinguishing among such terms as retention, turnover, attrition, migration, mobility, and reassignment. The second part examines the literature on why teachers quit, covering issues such as compensation, working conditions, and stress. The third section reviews research that has studied the effects of mentoring on retention. These studies and reviews suggest that mentoring is correlated with the retention of new teachers in the profession, and may also be related to decreased turnover from district to district and school to school. The clearest implication, however, is that most studies have limitations that are liable to compromise the implications one is able to draw from them. Either they do not specify the level of mentoring or the nature of the induction program under investigation, or, more likely, they combine results from a range of different programs. Conclusions call for more scientific studies on the relationship between mentoring and retention, more research on the relation between mentoring and other educational outcomes, and a suggestion that we might rethink career goals for teachers under the present social climate.

Available at [www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/1547688x.asp](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/1547688x.asp)

## A Study of Teacher Retention: The Effects of Mentoring for Beginning Teachers (2001)

Working Paper #3, Santa Cruz, CA: The New Teacher Center,  
University of California, Santa Cruz

*Michael Strong and Linda St. John*

This study examines 72 teachers six years after they were enrolled in an induction support program that provided them with veteran teachers released full-time as mentors. Every effort was made to locate these teachers, to determine if and where they were now teaching. Most were interviewed to find out their reasons for staying or leaving, the details of their teaching careers over the intervening years, and their plans for the future. A comparison sample of 25 teachers from neighboring districts not involved with a full-release mentoring program was also studied, and further comparisons were made with California and national data. It was found that 88% of the target teachers were still in the classroom, and a further 6% were in other positions in education. In comparison, approximately 50% of the teachers from nearby districts were still teaching. Data for the state of California show 84% still teaching after four years, and nationwide the number is 67% for the same time period. We conclude that the comprehensive induction program appears to be having a positive effect on teacher retention.

*Available at [www.newteachercenter.org/norti](http://www.newteachercenter.org/norti)*

## Mentoring New Teachers to Increase Retention: A Look at the Research

*Research Brief #05-01, New Teacher Center @ UC Santa Cruz*

*Michael Strong*

This brief report is the first in a series that summarizes NTC research on specific topics, placing it in the context of other work in the field. The report discusses the problem of teacher attrition, defines terms, and reviews possible solutions from the array that exists in the literature. Subsequently, the major part of the paper summarizes data from three studies that have attempted to measure the relation between induction support for new teachers and their retention in the profession. One study was conducted by Richard Ingersoll, using data from the national Schools and Staffing Survey. He concluded that the more comprehensive induction support a new teacher receives, the more likely they are to remain in the profession. Two further studies were conducted at the New Teacher Center. These studies tracked teachers six years after they had received support from the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project's comprehensive program for beginning teachers. In both cohorts, 88% of the teachers were still teaching after six years, and a further 6–7% performed other roles in education. Compared with statistics from California and the nation, these numbers suggest that comprehensive induction support is effective in increasing teacher retention.

*Brief available at [www.newteachercenter.org/research.php](http://www.newteachercenter.org/research.php)*



## Part 2: Mentoring Knowledge and Processes

### *Mentors' Knowledge and Practices*

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#### **Mentors in the Making: Developing New Leaders for New Teachers** (2006)

Teachers College Press, New York

*Betty Achinstein and Steven Z. Athanases (Editors)*

This book addresses the growing interest and questions about mentoring and teacher induction. It offers a unique view of developing quality mentors. Drawing on empirical research, practitioner action inquiry, and field-tested practice from induction programs, the work explores effective mentoring in diverse educational contexts. With richly contextualized and thoughtfully analyzed excerpts from actual mentoring conversations and powerful examples of practice, the volume offers educators, researchers, and policymakers a reform-minded vision of the future of mentoring. Contributing authors include practitioners and researchers who participated in an educational reform network building leadership in teacher induction. The book argues for a view of induction and mentoring that challenges the status quo of teacher preparation. It focuses on developing a knowledge base of mentoring based on research. Part I highlights the challenge of focusing novices on the needs of diverse learners. Part II focuses on what mentors should know and be able to do in relation to curriculum and teaching. Part III asks what mentors need to know and be able to act upon in relation to organizational contexts and purposes of induction. Each chapter identifies a problematic terrain to investigate, and highlights the work of people who have been involved in mentoring and induction for years. It provides a window into the complexities of mentoring and powerful lessons about the nature of change in students' experiences, teacher and mentor learning, and organizational cultures.

*Available at [www.tcpress.com](http://www.tcpress.com) or [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org)*

### **New Visions for Mentoring New Teachers** (2006)

In B. Achinstein and S. Z. Athanases (Eds.) *Mentors in the Making: Developing New Leaders for New Teachers*. New York: Teachers College Press

*Betty Achinstein and Steven Z. Athanases*

This chapter articulates a broad knowledge base for mentoring, highlighting the bifocal perspective of mentors' focus on novices' and students' learning needs. Up close, the mentor focuses on the new teachers, what she or he knows and needs. The mentor simultaneously holds the big picture in view, which is the students, their learning, and their needs. It introduces the current policy contexts of mentoring and induction in the United States. It draws on research from the New Teacher Center's Leadership Network for Teacher Induction (a consortium of induction program leadership teams from the San Francisco Bay Area) and highlights mentors' knowledge base in three domains: learners and learning; curriculum and teaching; organizational contexts and purposes. It develops a framework for understanding this knowledge base that maps on to research on teaching. The chapter further highlights shortcomings in current mentoring and induction conceptions, based on limited assumptions about novices and learning focused on adjustment and survival. Instead, this work offers a new vision for mentoring, where mentors are focused on educative mentoring and critical perspectives; they are viewed as inquirers and learners; seen as change agents and educational leaders; and their work is shaped by professional knowledge based on the needs of 21st Century new teachers and schools.

*Available at [www.tcpress.com](http://www.tcpress.com) or [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org)*

## Mentoring Relationships and New Teacher Learning: Collaboration and Complexity (2004)

*Journal of Educational Change*, 5(4), 311–344

*Betty Achinstein and Anthony Villar*

Much of the research and policy rhetoric on mentor-novice relationships highlights benefits for new teacher learning and a progression from dependence to autonomy. Yet such optimistic appraisals downplay the variation of professional collaborations between mentor and novice. Not all forms of teacher collaboration are alike. These differences inform the kinds of teacher learning and changes in practice. Further, past models that identify progressive stages of mentoring relationships capture development of the interaction, yet they claim a uni-directionality that may not represent how certain relationships remain static, or others may not proceed in a clear direction towards novice independence. Authors identify a spectrum of mentoring interactions drawing on analysis of mentoring conversations, classroom videos, and interviews in four in-depth cases from a larger study of mentor-novice pairs in California and literature on collaboration, socialization and micropolitics. The collaboration spectrum includes: a) *contrived*, where the interaction is a social performance shaped by compliance to external demands (Hargreaves, 1994); b) *uni-directional*, when the mentor directs and controls the exchange providing the novice with information; c) *guided collaboration*, which combines mentor facilitation with joint exploration by new teacher; and d) *reciprocal*, where a two-way exchange supports new teacher autonomy and mentor development. These different relationships activate power dynamics with implications for how teachers learn to teach and develop a sense of themselves as professionals. The study points to the need to recognize that mentoring relationships are not “one size fits all,” and thus the professional development of mentors needs to include a spectrum of approaches.

Available at [www.springer.com/sgw/cda/frontpage/0,11855,4-40406-70-35706917-0,00.html](http://www.springer.com/sgw/cda/frontpage/0,11855,4-40406-70-35706917-0,00.html)

## Focusing New Teachers on Individual and Low Performing Students: The Centrality of Assessment in the Mentor's Repertoire of Practice (2003)

*Teachers College Record*, 105(8), 1486–1520

*Steven Z. Athanases and Betty Achinstein*

Mentoring novice teachers often features buddy support, technical advice, and classroom management tips to meet teacher-centered concerns of survival. Such mentoring aligns with conventional models of teacher development that describe the novice concerned with self-image, materials and procedures, and management, and only after the initial years, able to focus on individual student learning. Drawing on the wisdom of practice of 37 experienced teacher induction leaders and case studies of mentor/new teacher pairs, this study found that mentors can interrupt that tendency among new teachers, focusing them on the learning of individual students, especially those underperforming. For this work, mentors tap knowledge of student and teacher learners, pedagogy for classrooms and for tutoring teachers, and especially multi-layered knowledge and abilities in several domains of assessment. These include assessment of students, alignment of curriculum with standards, and formative assessment of the new teacher. Skillful use of this knowledge can bring individual student learning into focus and help new teachers generate methods for shaping instruction to meet students' varied learning needs. These results challenge developmental models of teaching and conservative mentoring practices, calling for articulation of a knowledge base and relevant mentor development to focus new teachers early on individual student learning.

*Available at [www.tcrecord.org](http://www.tcrecord.org)*



## Mentors' Knowledge of Formative Assessment: Guiding New Teachers to Look Closely at Individual Students (2006)

In B. Achinstein and S. Z. Athanases (Eds.) *Mentors in the Making: Developing New Leaders for New Teachers*. New York: Teachers College Press

*Steven Z. Athanases and Betty Achinstein*

Little work has examined how mentors can help new teachers move past survival mode to focus on individual student learning. This chapter reports from a study addressing this concern, challenging the limited developmental models of teaching. It offers descriptive examples of mentoring conversations that foster novices' focus on individual, and particularly low performing students. The chapter highlights the domains of assessment in the mentor's repertoire of practice. In particular, the authors examine: basic knowledge of assessment of students; knowledge of standards and how to gauge curricular alignment; and knowledge of formative assessment of beginning teachers. Formative assessment of new teachers involves observing and assessing new teachers' focus on learners, structuring learning-focused conversations with the teachers and guiding novice growth toward student learning goals. The chapter explores cases of mentors' assessment knowledge in practice, highlighting both promises and challenges in enacting such a knowledge base. The mentors revealed knowledge of assessment through a focused collaborative analysis of classroom data. They also demonstrate the complexity of such a task and the decisions needing to be weighed. The chapter highlights mentors' need for developing strong knowledge of formative assessment of both students and new teachers, with implications for professional development of mentors.

*Available at [www.tcpress.com](http://www.tcpress.com) or [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org)*

**An Analysis of Mentoring Conversations with Beginning Teachers: Suggestions and Responses** (2004)

*Teaching and Teacher Education, 20, 47–57*

*Michael Strong and Wendy Baron*

This study analyzes how mentor teachers make pedagogical suggestions to beginning teachers during mentoring conversations and how beginning teachers respond. Sixty-four conversations between 16 veteran teacher mentors and their beginning teacher protégés are examined and analyzed. Suggestions from the mentors are identified and coded, as are the responses from the beginning teachers, using a framework from interactional sociolinguistics and conversational analysis. The analysis reveals that, in a corpus of more than 30 hours of conversation, we find a mere 10 instances where the mentor makes a direct suggestion. The extreme efforts of mentors to avoid giving direct advice, and a corpus that includes an overwhelming preponderance of indirect suggestions, about one-third of which produce elaborated responses from the novice teachers, cause us to search for explanations by examining contexts both internal and external to the text. It is suggested that the observed conversational patterns may be largely explained by the philosophy of the program (based on the Cognitive Coaching model) of which the mentors and beginning teachers are a part.

*Available at [www.elsevier.com/locate/tate](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/tate)*



## Mentor-Novice Conversations about Teaching: A Comparison of Two U.S. and Two Chinese Cases (2004)

*Teachers College Record*, 106(4), 775–813

*Jian Wang, Michael Strong, and Sandra Odell.*

Mentor-novice collaborative reflection about teaching is crucial to the development of novices' professional knowledge. However, few studies examine content and forms of mentor-novice conversations and opportunities that such interactions create for developing professional knowledge. Drawing on observation data from two U.S. and two Chinese mentor-novice pairs in induction contexts, this study analyzed the content and forms of mentor-novice conversations about novices' lessons. We found that the U.S. and Chinese mentor-novice interactions were different in focus and form, and that these differences were likely related to the curriculum structures and organization of teaching and mentoring in each country. The interactions either offered or restricted novices' opportunities for developing professional knowledge necessary for reform-minded teaching.

*Available at [www.tcrecord.org](http://www.tcrecord.org)*

## Developing Effective Beginning Teachers through Mentor-Based Induction (2004)

*Mentoring and Tutoring*, 12(3), 321–333

*Stephen Fletcher and Adele Barrett*

Past research on new teacher induction has focused on improving teacher retention and satisfaction. Keeping people in the profession and having them be happy in a classroom is important, but new teachers also need to develop habits that help them to be good instructional leaders and colleagues. To this end, novices may need help in learning about curriculum, pedagogy, school resources, and students. New teachers may also need assistance in learning how to interact with administrators, parents, and colleagues. Induction programs have been developed to help new teachers with the challenges faced during the first two years in a classroom as well as the profession. To study the effectiveness of one induction program, we asked participating new teachers, using an online survey, what they learned from mentors about curriculum, student diversity and collegiality. In addition, achievement gains of classes taught by new teachers and experienced teachers were compared. Based on the results of the analysis, the effectiveness of the program is discussed in terms of implications for in-service teacher training, organizational change, and data usage by districts.

*Available at [www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/13611267.asp](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/13611267.asp)*



## Researching the Domains of Mentor Development: The Transition from Veteran Classroom Teacher to Formal Mentor Status (2004)

Paper presented at American Educational Research Association Annual Conference,  
San Diego, CA

*Anthony Villar and Colleen Stobbe*

Issues of mentor development and effectiveness have received surprisingly little attention in academic inquiries of new teacher induction despite insistence that such programs provide meaningful opportunities for professional development. Up to this point, inquiry into the field of induction has focused on the habits and practices of new teachers but ignored similar matters for new mentors. Using focus group discussions, survey responses, personal communications and journal reflections of first, second and third year mentors over two years, we take the initial steps to explore and advance a theory of mentor development.

Findings were organized under four headings: complexity of the work, identity and status, project implementation and teacher/mentor relations. Change continually contributes to the complexity of mentor work, experienced mentors discuss the complexity of their work more frequently than new mentors, and they use it as entrée into the practice of other mentors. Mentors express little familiarity with and much trepidation about their new roles and responsibilities. As a consequence, mentors employ a number of strategies to dissipate their unease and to strengthen their commitment to their new status. With regard to project implementation it seems fairly clear that the project tools and procedures are meant to provide mentors with structural support for organizing and understanding mentoring work in an educational setting. Building a social network of mentors to discuss and engage the work is an important part of this process. In many instances however, logistical demands of the project have substantial influence on the ability of all mentors to deliver service, organize blocks of time, and manage caseloads. Finally, we found that mentors face a number of emotional and administrative contexts that impose on and moderate the relationship.

*Available at [www.newteachercenter.org/norti](http://www.newteachercenter.org/norti)*

## Beyond Mentoring: How the Mentoring Experience Improves the Professional Practice of Experienced Teachers (2006)

Paper presented at the NTC Symposium, San Jose, CA

*Susan Hanson and Ellen Moir*

This study examined how mentoring contributes to the ongoing professional development of experienced teachers and how they subsequently apply the skills and knowledge they gained as mentors. The research provides evidence that teachers who take time away from classroom teaching to be mentors are likely to return to school positions as school leaders with an increased interest in working in a professional learning environment.

We drew from a database of 72 former SCNTP mentors who worked between 1990 and 2004. From 50 survey respondents we learned that 91% of them returned to work in schools or teacher training programs. Forty-two percent returned to leadership positions as school administrators or resource teachers. In interviews with 18 former mentors we discussed the role mentoring played in their development, and how they apply the skills they learned as mentors to their current work.

The data suggest that mentoring results in professional growth, particularly in the areas of leadership development. The mentor experience is perceived by most veteran mentors as the most influential professional experience they have had since beginning teaching. One hundred percent of the administrators report that participating in SCNTP had a great impact on their ability to create a learning environment, talk with teachers about their teaching, and act as a change agent at their school. Ninety-four percent of the respondents report that the experience deepened their understanding of teaching and learning. Not all mentors were always able to put into practice in school settings what they had experienced as mentors. Policy implications are discussed.

*Available at [www.newteachercenter.org/norti](http://www.newteachercenter.org/norti)*

## Using Retired Teachers as Mentors for Beginning Teachers: An Opportunity or a Hindrance? (2005)

Paper presented at the NTC Symposium, San Jose, CA

*Sidney Klein*

This study investigates the interest, viability, and effectiveness of using retired teachers and administrators in mentoring roles for beginning teachers. The study was conducted in Northern California over the 2003–2004 school year. Findings were drawn from data collected through focus groups, a survey, and individual interviews with retired teacher mentors (REMs), beginning teachers (BTs), and veteran teacher mentors (VTMs).

These results indicate that retired educators offer the combination of interest and expertise that districts are looking for as they turn to mentor-based induction to reduce teacher turnover and attrition. Districts have access to a pool of recently retired educators who are eager to return to education as mentors. Less driven by money, these individuals are interested in transitional positions that allow them to remain connected to education before entering full retirement. Furthermore, they desire the chance to pass on their professional legacy to BTs and continue to support the development of young people, and they feel they have a wealth of experience to draw upon.

There are other benefits that REMs offer districts. First, retired educators may be a cost-effective option for mentoring. Second, they are typically full-release with small case loads. Third, many retirees hold extensive knowledge of district culture, including contacts with key personnel. Finally, REMs often possess many relevant curricular and instructional materials that they make available to their mentees.

One vital question remains; are REMs effective as beginning teacher mentors? This study indicates that within the New Teacher Center model, retired educators are highly effective as mentors, and no different in effectiveness from VTMs.

Available at [www.newteachercenter.org/norti](http://www.newteachercenter.org/norti)

**Supporting the New Principal:  
Managerial and Instructional Leadership  
in a Principal Induction Program** (2003)

*Michael Strong, Adele Barrett, and Gary Bloom*

This paper reports on a study of 31 beginning principals, 27 of whom were enrolled in a support program that provided mentoring by full-time coaches on release from their school district positions. Through interviews, questionnaires as well as a sub-sample of intensive case studies, researchers examined three questions using a framework of managerial and instructional leadership: 1) What problems new principals faced; 2) How coaches were able to support new principals; and 3) How effective the program was with regard to participant satisfaction, retention, and addressing managerial and instructional issues. While many of the stressors identified in the literature on new principals, such as time management and district issues, were evident among this sample, a surprising focus on student data analysis emerged among the supported principals. Principals found their coaches helpful with both managerial and instructional challenges, and several reported they would have quit without such support. Unsupported principals encountered similar problems, but were able to make it through without support. In general they lacked a focus on instruction issues, and several wished they could have had mentoring during their first year. The value of a formal mentoring program for beginning principals is indicated.

*Available at [www.newteachercenter.org/norti](http://www.newteachercenter.org/norti)*



## *Equity Focused Mentoring*

### **(Re)Framing Classroom Contexts: How New Teachers and Mentors View Diverse Learners and Challenges of Practice (2004)**

*Teachers College Record, 106(4), 716–746.*

*Betty Achinstein and Adele Barrett*

Research on new teachers identifies two critical challenges in relation to how novices view their students: “practice shock” that results in an over-focus on controlling students; and a cultural mismatch that causes novices to see diversity as a problem. This article explores how mentoring strategies intervene at this critical phase, influencing novices’ beliefs about students and teaching practices. This study examined 15 new teacher-mentor pairs over two years in Northern California through mentoring conversations, classroom observations, and interviews with mentors and novices working with culturally and linguistically diverse elementary students. Drawing on sociological, organizational, and new teacher educational literature, the study explores how novices and mentors come to “frame” and negotiate student diversity in the classroom. The authors expand on the work of Bolman and Deal (1997) to describe three ways of viewing classroom relations that the new teachers and mentors used—managerial, human relations, and political. The managerial frame highlights issues of control or management of student behavior and procedures to maintain order in the classroom. The human relations frame identifies the classroom as a community defined by relationships among individuals with feelings and needs. The political frame sees the classroom as an arena of struggle between forces for social change and those that reproduce inequalities in the larger society. This article challenges current thinking about novice development by revealing how mentors offer new teachers a repertoire of frames to diagnose challenges and develop alternative approaches to meet the needs of diverse students.

*Available at [www.tcrecord.org](http://www.tcrecord.org)*

**Focusing New Teachers on Diversity and Equity:  
Toward a Knowledge Base for Mentors** (2005)

*Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(7), 843–862

*Betty Achinstein and Steven Z. Athanases*

New teachers in the United States often are unprepared to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Preparing teachers for diversity has generated widespread interest in mentoring, yet little research has explored a knowledge base for equity-focused mentoring. Drawing on expertise of leading mentor practitioners and a case study, this article builds a framework for what mentors need to know and be able to do to focus new teachers on equity, and meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. The article reports on four domains of mentor knowledge and ability. The first domain is pedagogical knowledge for equity: to teach diverse learners and foster equity; and to focus new teachers on diversity and equity in mentoring sessions. The second domain is about contexts relevant to teaching diverse youth, including strategies and resources to help teachers learn about their local culture, community, and about negotiating their professional world. This domain also includes understanding the broader social and structural issues related to diversity and inequities in society and schooling. The third domain relates to knowledge of learners and what diverse learners bring to class. Fourth is the mentor's knowledge of self, related to diversity and equity. Mentors need a bilevel and multi-domain knowledge base, targeting both students and teachers. The article builds on Grimmet & MacKinnon's (1992) conception of pedagogical learner knowledge to understand what mentors do to focus novices on diverse students' needs. Analyses delineate challenges and tensions in tapping this knowledge base in the action of mentoring.

Available at [www.elsevier.com/locate/tate](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/tate)



## Mentors' Knowledge of Equity and Diversity: Maintaining a Bifocal Perspective on New Teachers and Their Students (2006)

In B. Achinstein and S. Athanases (Eds.) *Mentors in the Making: Developing New Leaders for New Teachers*. New York: Teachers College Press

*Betty Achinstein and Steven Z. Athanases*

How can mentors support new teachers to meet the needs of culturally diverse learners and foster equity in classrooms? This chapter examines how experienced mentors and induction leaders characterize what mentors need to know and be able to do to focus novices on diversity and equity, and what this knowledge base looks like in practice from an in-depth case study of a mentor and her new teacher. The chapter explores the problematic nature of the work and discusses the multidimensional knowledge base of mentoring for equity and its educational implications. The case describes the mentor's repertoire in working with a new teacher in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom, and the nuances of developing more equitable practices. The mentor supports the novice to examine inequitable conditions, differentiation of instruction, and high expectations, while negotiating and sustaining their relationship. The work highlights a bilevel knowledge base targeting students and new teachers. To enact this bilevel knowledge base mentors assume a bifocal perspective holding the up close focus on novices, yet maintaining the big picture on students and their needs. The chapter builds a conceptual frame of the bilevel knowledge base highlighting: pedagogy; contexts; learners; and self, focused on targeting novices and their diverse students. New teachers often begin ill-prepared to understand cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students and with limited repertoires of pedagogy and curriculum. This chapter argues that mentors also need to be equipped to guide, question, and challenge these novices as they begin their careers.

*Available at [www.tcpress.com](http://www.tcpress.com) or [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org)*

## **Mentored Learning to Teach for Equity: How Mentors' Conceptions of Equity Inform New Teachers' Practice in Addressing the Needs of Diverse Students (2004)**

Paper presented at American Educational Research Association Annual Conference

*Betty Achinstein, Wendy Baron, and Adele Barrett*

Little research has examined mentors' conceptions and practices associated with mentoring for equity, or the actual effects on teaching practice resulting from mentoring by tracing how the mentoring conversations, the core technology of mentoring, directly impact classroom teaching. Thus our study asked: a) What are mentors' conceptions of mentoring for equity and how are they reflected in mentors' practices?; and b) Does mentoring for equity impact novices' teaching? This paper reports on a study that examined documents from equity-focused professional development of mentors, survey responses from 21 mentors, mentoring conversations of 10 new teacher-mentor pairs, and observations of the 10 new teachers' practice. Findings highlight first that when the mentoring conversations did focus on equity concerns and strategies were discussed, those strategies transferred directly to the new teachers' classroom practice. Second, the study also highlights how the mentoring conversations focused novices' thinking and practice on one end of that spectrum—a "pedagogy of access," rather than a more critical, transformative, or social justice oriented end of the spectrum. Third, most mentors and their new teachers also tended to identify equity issues by defining students as individuals or by categories of educational needs (i.e., English language learners) rather than examining equity through group membership or an institutional analysis (McDonald, 2003). The authors argue that induction program context (e.g., mentor professional development, protocols, and observation instruments), mentor demographics, political environment, and tensions inherent in the mentors' role informed the mentors' and ultimately the new teachers' equity practices.

*Draft available at [www.newteachercenter.org/norti](http://www.newteachercenter.org/norti)*

## Part 3: Policy and Organizational Contexts of Induction

### *Induction Policy Issues*

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#### **Is Mentoring Worth the Money? A Benefit-Cost Analysis and Five-year Rate of Return of a Comprehensive Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers** (2005)

*Anthony Villar and Michael Strong*

This study describes a benefit-cost analysis of a comprehensive mentoring program for beginning teachers conducted in a medium-sized California school district. Using actual program cost information and data on student achievement, teacher retention, and mentor evaluations, we performed a benefit-cost analysis to determine whether comprehensive mentoring for beginning teachers makes financial sense to society. The data showed that, contrary to expectations, increases in teacher effectiveness yielded greater savings than the reduction in costs associated with teacher attrition. Overall, the benefit-cost analysis showed that, after five years, an investment of one dollar produces a return of one dollar and fifty cents. Implications are drawn for both education and public policy.

*Draft available at [www.newteachercenter.org/norti](http://www.newteachercenter.org/norti)*

## Teacher Induction in the Midwest: Illinois, Wisconsin, and Ohio (2005)

*Lora Bartlett, Lisa S. Johnson, Diana Lopez, Emily Sugarman,  
and Marguerite Wilson*

This paper analyzes the findings from a three-state study of teacher induction policy. It looks within and across the states of Illinois, Ohio, and Wisconsin to explore the landscape and experience of teacher induction. In each state, we conducted interviews with key policy makers, advisors and those positioned at the state level to be both knowledgeable about and influential in the crafting of induction policy. We also conducted urban district interviews with key district and union leaders. All interviews focused on teacher induction, specifically: the history and evolution of programs, details of current efforts, descriptions of what is considered most desirable, perceived barriers between current efforts and desired programs, and conceptions of the state's role in orchestrating teacher induction. This paper finds that: 1) The focus on induction has recently increased in these three states and that each state's induction policy is in a different place along a developmental continuum. 2) States have linked teacher induction to credentialing as an effective policy lever. 3) The goals, elements, and outcomes of induction need to be clearly articulated and tracked at the state level to ensure the full potential of induction is realized. 4) Effective induction policy balances state guidelines with local autonomy. 5) Insufficient funding for new teacher induction can widen the student achievement gap.

*Draft available at [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org)*



## *Organizational and Political Contexts of Induction and Socialization of Novices*

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### **Are We Creating Separate and Unequal Tracks of Teachers? The Impact of State Policy, Local Conditions, and Teacher Background on New Teacher Socialization (2004)**

*American Educational Research Journal*, 41(3), 557–603.

*Betty Achinstein, Rodney T. Ogawa, and Anna Speigman*

While researchers have identified student tracking as reproducing inequities, this article examines the largely unexplored terrain of new teacher tracking—the sorting and socialization of novices into two tracks. This article explores the possibility that state educational policies, involving accountability and instructional reform, and local district and school conditions interact with teachers’ personal and professional backgrounds to shape two tracks of new teachers, tracks which reinforce existing educational inequities. This two-year study incorporated mixed methods and a multi-level design including state policy, local conditions, and teachers’ beliefs and practices, highlighting two cases from a larger database. We report how differences in district capital shaped responses to state policy, influenced teacher recruitment, interacted with teacher characteristics, and created learning opportunities for new teachers that suggest the creation of two classes of teachers for two classes of students. We explored the intersection between teacher socialization and educational tracking positing that socialization in the current policy environment of accountability and instructional reform produces two relatively distinct teacher tracks. The tracks can be distinguished in three ways: a) distinctions based on social class, race and ethnicity, and perhaps gender; b) levels of inputs, including professional development opportunities, instructional control, organizational resources, and curriculum and pedagogy; and c) outcomes in the form of teachers’ sense of competence and efficacy, and their teaching beliefs and practices.

*Available at [www.aera.net/publications/?id=315](http://www.aera.net/publications/?id=315)*

**(In)fidelity: What New Teacher Resistance Reveals about Professional Principles and Prescriptive Educational Policies** (2006)

*Harvard Educational Review*

*Betty Achinstein and Rodney T. Ogawa*

This article highlights the cases of two novice teachers, who engaged in resistance against a scripted literacy program that was approved by the state and adopted by the teachers' school districts. It follows the professional lives of two successful new teachers who challenge the policy environment. Emerging from a larger study of the impact of school and district organization on the socialization of novices, these cases reveal that the resistance of these teachers was rooted in professional principles and, in at least one case, was initially supported by a professional community. The cases challenge dominant images of teacher resistance as personality flaws and conservative acts needing to be altered. Instead they identify instances of principled resistance, overt or covert acts that reject instructional policies, programs or other efforts to control teachers' work that undermine or contradict professional principles. These cases also reveal the unintended consequences of prescriptive instructional programs and control-oriented educational policies. The article focuses on how districts enact the current policy environment by demanding that teachers implement literacy programs with "fidelity," establishing a technical and moralistic tone, which constrains critique and marginalizes dissent in the profession. The work explores issues of teacher control, professional community, and resistance in the current educational policy climate, with implications for novice socialization, policy, research, and practice.

*Available at [gseweb.harvard.edu/~hepg/online.html](http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~hepg/online.html)*

## Mentors' Organizational and Political Literacy in Negotiating Induction Contexts (2006)

In B. Achinstein and S. Z. Athanases (Eds.) *Mentors in the Making: Developing New Leaders for New Teachers*. New York: Teachers College Press

*Betty Achinstein*

This chapter explores the organizational contexts of mentoring and induction. In this study the author asks: what do mentors need to know and be able to do in relation to school and district contexts in order to advocate on behalf of their induction work? And, what are the challenges mentors face in their school and district contexts? This chapter examines the wisdom of practice of a network of teacher induction leaders through questionnaires, interviews, and instances of mentoring practice. The work extends a theory of micropolitical literacy to mentoring contexts and finds that mentors need an ability to *read* the organizational system, a repertoire of strategies to navigate, and an ability to help new teachers learn how to read and influence their organizational contexts. The work also highlights the institutional and organizational challenges to mentors in developing such knowledge and skills. It articulates an organizational and political knowledge base of mentors that includes three dimensions. The first dimension is reading organizational and political contexts (including reading systems, others, helping novices read, and reading oneself). The second is to navigate challenges within the organization (developing a repertoire of strategies, marshaling resources, and guiding novices to navigate challenging contexts). The third dimension is to advocate for change (influencing change, understanding the change process, and guiding novices to advocate for themselves). The chapter includes a case study of a mentor demonstrating the promises and challenges of enacting a knowledge base of political literacy in support of novice development.

Available at [www.tcpres.com](http://www.tcpres.com) or [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org)

**New Teacher and Mentor Political Literacy: Reading, Navigating and Transforming Induction Contexts** (2006)

*Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 12(2), 153–168

*Betty Achinstein*

New teachers are unprepared for school politics and conflicts they experience with administrators, colleagues, and policies. Research and practice on mentoring often ignore organizational contexts. The article explores these underexamined contexts. Drawing on practitioner expertise and an intensive case study, this research article highlights three critical domains of mentors' political literacy: reading, navigating, and advocating. Analyses delineate challenges and promising practices in tapping this knowledge base in action. An analysis of the mentor and novice's political literacy demonstrates how mentoring must be understood within the multi-level organizational context of schools and the larger policy environment in which they are embedded. The article also raises questions about the appropriate role of mentors as local guides or critical change agents (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). The mentor's role is all too often seen as easing the transition of novices into the current system, rather than criticizing schooling practices. It further highlights moral and identity development dimensions of political literacy. The conflicts that initiate political activities are embedded in issues of morality—what is right and wrong in education. As new teachers develop beliefs about what is right for students and teaching, they come to see the conflicts that arise between their own ideals and those in their organizational surroundings. Mentors' political literacy offers their novices a way to act in the political climate of schools, to address inevitable conflicts with colleagues, administrators, and policies, and ultimately serves to define a professional identity. Rather than viewing politics as negative, the author reveals how knowledge of schooling politics enhances mentors' repertoires and supports novice development.

Available at [www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/13540602.asp](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/13540602.asp)

## **Building a Community of Learners and Leaders for Transformational Induction: A Case Study of a Network of California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Programs (2001)**

Paper presented at American Educational Research Association Annual Conference.

*Betty Achinstein*

This study asks what are the challenges for teacher leaders engaged in induction? What supports their leadership in ways that foster their own learning and leading, the development of transformative induction models, and changed educational environments? This work is focused on making empirical and theoretical contributions by examining research about an educational reform network building leadership in induction. Drawing on a case study of the New Teacher Center at University of California, Santa Cruz's Leadership Network for Teacher Induction, the work addresses critical elements of a conceptual framework on fostering a community of learners and leaders for excellence in new teacher development. The paper focuses on supports and challenges in fostering such a community of leaders. Supports highlighted are: a) using induction as a leverage for systems change; b) explicit leadership capacity development; c) use of inquiry for learning; and d) the power of professional learning communities for induction leaders. Challenges identified include: a) the role transition from classroom teacher to leader of colleagues; b) the precarious and noninstitutionalized role of teacher leaders; and c) the political awareness needed to work with broader educational systems. The paper spotlights how little leadership development is provided for teacher leaders. The irony is painful that teachers who nurture the development of others rarely are given the same support for themselves. The paper speaks to fostering leadership and learning among a community of induction leaders.

*Available at [www.newteachercenter.org/norti](http://www.newteachercenter.org/norti)*



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RA06-01