

Comprehensive Induction

Districts that are serious about training and retaining teachers have a comprehensive induction program. Read how to implement one in the **Going Beyond** folder for the *Epilogue* at EffectiveTeaching.com.

The single most important factor in student achievement is the effectiveness of the teacher.

It takes five years for a teacher to become effective. The best way to produce effective teachers is with an induction program.

Two definitions are in order.

1. Mentoring and induction are not the same. Mentoring is what one person does. Induction is a comprehensive process.
2. Induction and comprehensive induction are the same.

Mentoring does not produce effective teachers. The Alliance for Excellent Education has found that **comprehensive induction** is most effective at training and keeping good teachers in the classroom.

Because so many people and programs just give their new teachers a mentor and incorrectly call this induction, researchers and knowledgeable educators began to use the redundant term “comprehensive induction” to enforce that induction must be a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained process.

- **Comprehensive.** There is a structure to the program, consisting of many activities/components and many people who are involved.
- **Coherent.** The various components, activities, and people are logically connected to each other.
- **Sustained.** The comprehensive and coherent program continues for many years.

A mentor, in and of itself, has no purpose, goal, or agenda for student achievement. After a year of one-to-one mentoring, the new teacher retreats to the practice of stand-alone teaching in an isolated classroom. Just giving a new teacher a mentor alone will never produce an effective teacher.

As Richard Ingersoll reported in 2000, less than 1 percent of beginning teachers received comprehensive induction, yet, 100 percent of pilots, firefighters, nurses, and most all other employees receive comprehensive training.

What Is Comprehensive Induction?

Once on the job, all beginning teachers must learn to

- teach to established standards,
- evaluate the impact of their instruction on student performance,
- use student achievement data for planning and curriculum,
- tailor instruction to address specific learning needs, and
- learn how to thrive in the culture of the school.

This kind of learning can only happen in a comprehensive induction program.

Components of Comprehensive Induction

- Initial four to five days of preschool workshops
- Continuum of professional development activities for two or more years
- A strong sense of administrative support with a campus coordinator
- A coaching component utilizing trained coaches
- A structure for networking with new and veteran teachers
- Opportunities to visit demonstration classrooms
- A welcome center that provides help to settle into a new community
- A bus tour of the community, led by the superintendent
- A formative assessment process that helps the new teacher develop skills for student achievement

Examples of Comprehensive Induction Programs

Each of the following school districts have comprehensive induction programs. At our request, they have created an overview of their program to share with readers. Click the link at the end of each description to be taken to the document.

Flowing Wells Schools. This is an eight-year process that takes teachers from novices to experts. In operation for more than 20 years, it is the best—the “mother-of-all” induction programs! [Click here.](#)

Lafourche Parish Schools. The results of this program are so good that Louisiana adopted it as the state model. [Click here.](#)

Islip School District. This three-year induction program has resulted in more than 98 percent of the seniors graduating with a New York Regent’s Diploma. [Click here.](#)

Prairie Rose School Division. This is an exceptional program that involves all the veteran teachers in building a school culture. [Click here.](#)

Consultants from the above four school districts are available to help you structure a comprehensive induction program. Please write to HWong@HarryWong.com to request their contact information.

Kern County School District. This county district helps teachers in many of its local districts, almost all rural, fulfill the standards that California teachers must meet. [Click here.](#)

Penn Hills School District. This is a very well thought-out comprehensive, coherent, and sustained induction program to use as a model. [Click here.](#)

Why New Teachers Fail

New teachers are being recruited by the thousands, but few if any support systems are being put into place to allow their successful transition into the classroom. Here are some startling facts from The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education on why new teachers fail:

- Few teachers began teaching with a clear, operational curriculum in hand and even fewer received curricula that aligned with state standards.

- 56 percent of new teachers reported that no extra assistance was available to them as new teachers.
- While 87 percent of the new teachers in a particular state said they had a mentor, only 17 percent reported that their mentors ever observed them teach.

When new teachers fail, the school fails because it is the teacher that is the most important factor in producing student achievement.

- Ineffective schools do nothing to train their new teachers; they buy programs instead. Programs do not improve student learning; teachers improve student learning.
- Successful schools stress practices. They wisely invest in their teachers and the effectiveness of their teachers. They don't teach programs; they work at improving the instructional practices of their teachers because instructional skill is a major factor in improving student achievement.

Good teaching matters for student achievement more than any other single education resource. To fix your most troubled schools, invest in a continuing professional development program of improving teacher instruction skills.

We Know How to Improve Student Achievement!

It is the teachers and their instructional practices, not curriculum programs or a change in the school structure, which improves student learning. We know how to improve student learning.

1. **It's with trained teachers who are effective.**
2. **It's with a staff that works together—administrators and teachers—with a laser focus on student achievement.**

What keeps and grows good teachers are structured, sustained, intensive professional development programs that allow new teachers to observe others, to be observed by others, and to be part of networks or study groups where all teachers share together, grow together, and learn to respect each other's work.

More Resources

More information on how to establish an induction program is found in the following articles. Click on the link after title to be taken to the article.

“Teachers: The Next Generation” [Click here.](#)

“New Teacher Induction: The Foundation for Comprehensive, Coherent, and Sustained Professional Development” [Click here.](#)

“What the World Can Teach Us About New Teacher Induction” [Click here.](#)

“Induction Programs That Keep New Teachers Teaching and Improving” [Click here.](#)

“Save Millions—Train and Support New Teachers” [Click here.](#)

“Induction: The Best Form of Professional Development” [Click here.](#)

“Mentoring Can’t Do It All” [Click here.](#)