

Guest Editor's Introduction: Teacher Induction

By Carol A. Bartell

What state policies should shape the early years of teaching? Since the early 1980s, when a variety of state and national reform reports began to call for a new model of teacher professionalism, California has been testing, refining, and implementing new policies impacting the professional preparation and development of teachers. In this “restructured” vision of teacher professionalism, the induction period—generally defined as the first two years of professional practice—has received considerable attention.

Carol A. Bartell is dean of the School of Education, California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, California. She was a consultant with the Professional Services Division of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Sacramento, California, while serving as guest editor for this issue of Teacher Education Quarterly.

The California legislature recognized the importance of the early years of teaching when it initiated a four year (1988-1992) pilot study known as the California New Teacher Project (CNTTP). The pilot project demonstrated that cost-effective induction strategies could improve teacher retention and performance and would result in significantly better instruction for students.

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nia Legislature expressed its renewed commitment to developing “new policies to govern the support and assessment of beginning teachers, as a condition for the professional certification of those teachers in the future.” In moving beyond the pilot phase to create the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Program, the Legislature stated:

Teaching is a complex, demanding profession that is learned over the course of several years of study, consultation, and reflective practice. Having received the recent report of the California New Teacher Project, the Legislature finds and declares that the performances of students and beginning teachers improve substantially as a result of training that is appropriate for the novices, intensive assistance by mentors who are carefully selected and trained, and accurate assessments of new teachers’ professional practices. [Chapter 1245, Statutes of 1992, Section 15 (d)]

However, the legislature also recognized that the induction years represent only one phase of the teacher development continuum, which begins with recruitment and entry into preparation programs, includes an induction or entry period, and continues throughout teachers’ careers as they continue to learn and grow. These phases of teacher development ought to be conceptually linked, and guided by coherent and consistent state policies and practices. In that search for coherence, the Legislature directed the teacher standard setting and licensing body in California, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, to reexamine policies related to induction, but to do so in consideration of the larger context. The same legislation that created BTSA in 1992 (Senate Bill 1422, Bergeson), also directed the Commission to review all requirements for earning and renewing basic teaching credentials, giving special emphasis to the induction phase and the findings of the pilot study and related research.

The Commission views this review as an opportunity to design a new system of teacher credentialing for 21st century schools. The licensing body is prepared to consider significant, systemic reforms in teacher education, induction, and development. Induction remains a part—a key part—of the continuum of teacher development.

During the CNTP, we learned a great deal about supporting and assessing new teachers. We learned that well-designed, intensive, cost-effective support improves teacher retention, teacher performance, career satisfaction, and stimulates and fosters teacher reflection and collegiality. We learned that in assessing new teachers in ways that allow them to demonstrate their authentic teaching abilities, we are able to provide better information about their practices and their ongoing professional development needs.

We also identified weaknesses in our current credential structure. We know that we can’t simply **add** an induction phase to the current credential structure without a careful, thoughtful examination of that entire structure. We can’t simply **add** an assessment of performance during the induction period without consider-

ation of the other assessments that take place during the teacher's preservice and entry years.

This issue of *Teacher Education Quarterly* is devoted to the long-range implications of California's extensive, comprehensive work on beginning teacher induction. What have we learned that can contribute to a new vision of teaching as a professional endeavor? What is the special nature of the induction or entry period in that newly defined vision? What are the implications for teacher preparation programs and for teacher educators? These and other issues are explored in the articles in this special thematic issue.

Linda Darling-Hammond describes the new conception of teaching and teacher development that is shaping state and national reform efforts and gives examples of some efforts that emanate from this vision. An essential element of this vision is that teachers define high standards for their own performance and are willing to be held accountable for meeting those standards. Darling-Hammond points out that the knowledge, skills, and commitments of teachers prepared today will shape and inform what is possible for the future generation of students. She commends California for its work with beginning teachers and its sustained commitments to improving professional practice.

Carol A. Bartell describes the California efforts to examine and shape induction policies in the CNTP and its successor, BTSA. The key research findings and the emerging policy directions resulting from this work are presented.

The next two articles explore the integral and interrelated aspects of beginning teacher induction—teacher assessment practices and new teacher support strategies. The article by Marcella R. Dianda and Karen Hunter Quartz, drawn from work conducted for the Commission by the Southwest Regional Educational Laboratory, gives attention to the costs of promising support strategies. These researchers outline programmatic as well as economic dimensions and make recommendations for maximizing limited resources for the benefit of new teachers. Four researchers from the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development—Jo Ann Izu, Claudia Long, Kendyll Stansbury, and Dennis S. Tierney—report on their study of existing teacher assessment practices and conclude that California currently lacks a coherent, rigorous system of assessments guided by a clearly-defined set of performance expectations. High expectations, however, will not be achieved if teachers are left to struggle and learn-by-doing in their initial years of practice.

The remaining articles present examples of induction approaches grounded in developmental models of learning to teach. Each recognizes the linkages between preservice and induction learnings and the need for school/university collaborations in connecting those learnings. Ruth A. Sandlin and Sharon Feigan probe the nature and conditions of effective collaborations in response to their own question: can such collaborations work? Ellen Moir and Colleen Stobe describe a model built on the premise that teacher development involves continuous inquiry into education practice within a structure that provides systematic support and feedback at

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different stages of the teacher's career development. The final article in this set of three, by Linda D. Scott, traces the development of a cognitively-based model of teacher role acquisition (organizer, mentor, instructor, colleague, and learner) and their component task domains. These models are presented not simply to highlight effective practices, many of which have emerged in the conduct of CNTP and BTSA, but to raise important policy questions and issues for consideration.

These articles together are intended to contribute to the discussion of teacher induction policies for California. However, the implications of this work extend beyond California, a state rich in diversity and complexity, but fully committed to a professional view of teaching. Many other states share these commitments and can learn from these long-term California experiments and emerging state policy developments.

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