Focus

The Excellent Schools Act and Its Effect on Teacher Induction Programs

The 1997–98 school year promises to be one of renewed commitment to teacher education and teacher induction programs. With the passage of the Excellent Schools Act (Senate Bill 272, House Bill 351), the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is working to improve the state’s mentor training program so that it can more effectively prepare quality mentors for novice teachers. Not only will this legislation guide budget-making decisions in teacher induction programs, but it will provide incentives to professional educators to participate as mentors. Included in this newsletter are an interview with Peggy Hopkins, the new director of the division of the Department of Public Instruction responsible for implementing the teacher education aspects of the Excellent Schools Act; highlights of the Excellent Schools Act itself; and updates on research.

The N.C. State Model Clinical Teaching Program also is revising its curriculum for mentor training, expecting to complete and distribute the revisions by spring. A new strategic plan will be guiding the Model Clinical Teaching Program’s efforts this year. The plan emphasizes innovative approaches to teacher education, research and development on clinical teacher approaches, and extension of research to professional development school/university partnerships and school-university induction (mentoring) programs.

Features

Interview with Peggy Hopkins, Director of Human Resource Management, Department of Public Instruction

Peggy Hopkins is the director of the Division of Human Resource Management in the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. She coordinates the teacher education program-approval process for 47 institutions in North Carolina, as well as initial licensure programs and mentoring programs. Along with these major functions, Hopkins has many responsibilities for personnel and teacher development. She coordinates the Technology Assessment Project for precollege recruitment, including Project TEACH scholarships. In the realm of personnel, she coordinates policy, benefits, and legal issues related to all aspects of recruitment, hiring, dismissal, and...
evaluation of public school personnel. Before joining the Department of Public In-
struction, she worked with the Nash–Rocky Mount Public School System, where she
coordinated staff development. The following interview concerns the effect of the Ex-
cellent Schools Act on teacher education programs and mentoring programs.

What are your visions in your new role as director of human resource
management at the Department of Public Instruction?

Hopkins: The Division of Human Resource Management will continue its
focus on precollege recruitment, preparation, induction, evaluation, and
professional development of educators. This focus will intensify, especially in
the areas of recruitment, induction, and evaluation. Program approval for
institutions of higher education will be more performance based. It is
imperative to continue and even expand the initiatives that recruit quality
candidates to our state’s teacher education institutions. Recruitment initiatives
for job selection also will be intensified. I believe that induction is a key
linkage between higher education and school systems. This linkage will
expand, with increased focus on the needs of beginning teachers, the
evaluation structures for all public school personnel, and the wave of new
school-university partnerships that are being encouraged.

Increasingly we also plan to become more true to the “human resource”
part of the division’s name, offering technical assistance that includes needs
assessment, organizational development, program planning and development,
and evaluation. We will access technology for distance learning, streamlining
of processes, and communication needs. Finally, our division plans to partner
with those in curriculum and instruction development, professional
development delivery, and evaluation. We envision a network of support for
identifying, nurturing, developing, and retaining high-quality personnel to
work with an increasingly diverse student population.

As you know, N.C. State University and its partner school systems prepare mentors
over the course of one year. Given the new legislative commitment to
mentoring programs, with monies being allocated as a result of the Excellent
Schools Act, what changes do you foresee in the current training programs?

Hopkins: Mentor training will continue to be essential. The Division of Human
Resource Management recently conducted an extensive analysis of the various
mentoring programs available in our state. We sought the support and
guidance of Leslie Huling [an expert on induction, based at Southwest Texas
State University], who also assisted us in developing some of the components
of our “toolkits.” Dr. Huling provided three days of mentor training to a cross-
section of educators (university, public school personnel, and Department of
Public Instruction staff). As a result of that training and the expertise in our
state, we have begun to develop a new North Carolina Mentor Training
Program. The training will be flexible, allowing program planners to tailor a
mentor program to the needs of individuals, schools, or school systems. A
collaborative initiative among public school personnel, university faculty, and
Department of Public Instruction staff will be piloted in the spring and released
to local districts and universities by May.

[The Model Clinical Teaching Program will continue to support a lengthier
training program for clinical mentors that includes coaching and adult
development principles and reflection. Clinical mentors need extensive
training to be able to work across the career span, assisting preservice
students, beginning teachers, and experienced teachers.]
As a state leader in developing new approaches for working with beginning teachers in the licensure process, what new initiatives do you foresee being implemented in the initial licensure program? How soon do you expect the standards of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) to be used for assessing beginning teachers?

Hopkins: Many new initiatives are on the horizon for our state. North Carolina is in its third and final year of piloting a licensure process that uses the INTASC standards and authentic assessment based on portfolios. Designed to encourage professional development, this process culminates in the creation of a performance-based product focused on the standards. In this final year of piloting, Richard Jaeger of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro is conducting a validation study. Additional evaluation is being done at East Carolina University. We project that the INTASC process will be used for statewide licensure purposes in 1999. That would affect the hiring class of 1997.

Our state also is working with INTASC in the piloting of its subject-area portfolio process. The two subject areas being piloted this year are mathematics and English/language arts.

Alignment of support programs with these new evaluation processes is essential. Modules will be developed to support mentors as they work with protégés in planning, instructing, evaluating, motivating, managing, and reflecting. The Effective Teacher Training Program is being redesigned around the INTASC standards and will reflect best practices in both design and program delivery as well as program content. The mentor and Effective Teacher Training programs will be externally evaluated by human resource developers.

How do you see the new requirement of three years for induction being incorporated into school district programs?

Hopkins: The three-year requirement for induction should provide local education agency personnel with the opportunity to truly orient and induct new professionals into the ranks. Since approximately 40 percent of our new hires are from out-of-state, the induction period is even more essential to support the transition. The need for orientation to school organization, culture, mission, and goals, and expectations from the state, district, and school levels, make these three years increasingly more important. Additionally the need for a graduated experience that includes a teaching context filled with learning opportunities, not obstacles or barriers, will be a clarion call to the State Board of Education, the Department of Public Instruction, and other key policy makers. Professional educators are realizing that orientation and mentor support will not alone solve the exodus of talented young professionals. That truly will require a systems approach to program design and implementation.

Our understanding is that mentors will receive $100 per month in their first year of mentoring a novice teacher. Is it true that, under the current legislation, they will not get additional money in the second and third years of this mentorship?

Hopkins: The legislation provides remuneration for mentoring and orientation. This gives schools and school systems some additional resources for induction of novices. These resources amount to salary for up to three days for each newly licensed teacher and $100 per month for mentors, or $1,100 in total. Both of these allocations come through the Budget Act and are for one year only. It is important for local school districts to choose mentors...
carefully, to ensure that they have the support they need, to monitor the mentor-protégé relationship for maximum benefit to the protégé, and to support the evaluations of this effort. Justification for continuing resources must be based on these evaluations.

The induction period has been extended to three years. At this time, however, no additional resources have been allocated for the second and third year of induction.

As you know, the Model Clinical Teaching Program at N.C. State University has encouraged interprofessional approaches to mentoring. Thus we’ve worked to have mentors for teachers, counselors, and school psychologists. Is there any hope that paid mentors can be provided for new counselors and school psychologists?

Hopkins: The State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction believe that all newly licensed professionals need mentors who are paid for their time and expertise, but at this time the legislature has provided monies to support only newly licensed teachers. It is imperative, I believe, that the experience with this year’s investment be documented and shared with key decision makers. That story, along with research on the needs of other new educators, may provide the impetus for additional funds for other groups.

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to share your thoughts with our readers.

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Highlights of the Excellent Schools Act of 1997
(A summary of the act’s components dealing with teacher preparation and induction)

**Purpose**
The purpose of the Excellent Schools Act is to improve the academic achievement of students. To accomplish this, the General Assembly will (1) concentrate student learning in the core academic areas, (2) improve teachers’ skills and knowledge as they relate to improved academic achievement of students, and (3) reward teachers for improved skills and knowledge and improved academic achievement of students.

**Raising of Standards**
The State Board of Education, as the lead agency, in coordination with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina and any other public and private agencies as necessary, shall continue to raise standards for entry into teacher education programs.

**Review of Programs and the Approval Process**
The State Board of Education shall develop a plan to provide a focused review of teacher education programs and the current process of accrediting those programs in order to ensure that the programs produce graduates who are well prepared to teach.

**Licensure**
The licensure program shall provide for initial licensure after completion of preservice training, continuing licensure after three years of teaching experience, and license renewal every five years thereafter.

**Orientation and Mentor Support Program**
The State Board of Education shall develop a mentor program to provide continuing support for teachers entering the profession. In developing the mentor program, the State Board shall conduct a comprehensive study of the needs of new teachers and ways in which those needs can be met through an orientation and mentor support program. To help local boards support new teachers, the State Board shall develop and distribute guidelines that address optimum teaching load, extracurricular duties, student assignment, and other considerations related to working conditions. The State Board also shall develop and coordinate a mentor teacher training program.

**Bonus Plan for Advanced Work and Board Certification**
It is the goal of the General Assembly to increase significantly the salaries of teachers who attain a “Master’s/Advanced Competencies” certificate and teachers who are certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), so as to provide an incentive for good teachers to become excellent teachers. In order to do so, it is further the goal of the General Assembly to enact, for the 1997–98 school year, a salary schedule plan that will provide a twelve percent (12%) bonus to teachers who attain NBPTS certification. It is further the goal of the General Assembly to enact by the year 2000 a salary schedule plan that will provide a ten percent (10%) bonus to teachers who attain a “Master’s/Advanced Competencies” certificate.
News and Notes

In Memoriam

Geraldine Spencer Martin, director of the Teaching Fellows program at N.C. State University, died suddenly on August 22, 1997. Gerry, as she was fondly known, had an extensive career in education, including teaching at the Governor Morehead School for the Blind and East Cary Middle School, serving as coordinator for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and Wake County Schools, and being an assistant principal at Briarcliff and Hunter elementary schools in Wake County. Gerry will be missed by those who knew her and by N.C. State, where she served the future teachers of North Carolina.

Clinical Instructors for 1997–98

N.C. State University is pleased to have the following exemplary public school classroom teachers again serve as clinical instructors: in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Bob Barefoot from Johnston County; Nancy Cope from Lee County; and Jane Brocious, Judy Darling, Karyn Gloden, JoAnn Hines-Duncan, Annette Penland (retired), Kim Short, and Shirley Simmons (retired) from Wake County; in the Department of Mathematics and Science, Tim Tucker from Nash–Rocky Mount; and in the College of Education and Psychology, Jane Steelman from Ravenscroft School, Raleigh. Further, several doctoral students are working with various education programs, as follows: Chris Godwin from Harnett County, with the Model Clinical Teaching Program; Nancy Havens from Franklin County, with agricultural extension; and Michelle Hsiang (not a local person), with technology education.

Fall and Spring Meetings for Network I

The Model Clinical Teaching Program once again will sponsor fall and spring meetings as part of its continuing support of Network I, a partnership of N.C. State University and six school systems interested in developmental induction programs and new leadership roles for teachers and counselors. Program staff are inviting principals to attend the meetings in order to elicit their support and to obtain helpful information from them as staff seek new ways of orienting and inducting beginning teachers. Counselors, mentor educators, and staff developers are encouraged to attend. At the fall meeting, to be held October 30, Peggy Hopkins of the Department of Public Instruction (see interview, page 1) will make a presentation. The spring meeting will be held on March 19, 1998, at the N.C. State faculty club.

Research and Resources

Considerations for Teacher Education Policy
Barbara Parramore, professor emeritus, North Carolina State University, July 1997

Those involved in making policy on teacher education must become advocates for improving the teaching profession. Four notions should guide policy:

• Change the rhetoric. Cease placing the blame for poor teacher preparation entirely on preservice education. Honor existing state policy, which calls for a six-year preparation—four years of college or university education and two years as an initially licensed teacher. The university and the school share the crucial duty of preparing the novice for continuing licensure.

• Acknowledge time as essential in teacher development. Other human service professionals—physicians, clinical psychologists, etc.—experience internships, supervised practice, and other placements beyond their formal study. Make the teacher’s first two years with a mentor comparable to the induction approach followed in other professions. (The Excellent Schools Act focuses on this essential role of career teachers.)
• Expect principals to become more knowledgeable about teacher development and curriculum and instruction. Administrators set the tone for teaching and learning in a school. They should act on research findings about the needs of beginning teachers so that novices do not have difficult assignments, heavy teaching loads, and extracurricular duties. Administrators also might see to some “perks” for career teachers: higher salaries and support for certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. In the preparation of principals, greater emphasis on curriculum and instruction is essential; principals must be more than managers.

Note: A survey of all N.C. State teacher education graduates in 1991 and 1992 who were in their first year of teaching in North Carolina schools, found that more than 50 percent of them, regular students and teaching fellows alike, had difficult placements, including “teaching from a cart,” multiple class preparations, and two or three extracurricular assignments. A sink-or-swim attitude seems to exist for novices in too many schools.

• Understand beginning teachers’ need for assistance in managing time, student motivation, and discipline. It is in these areas that learning on-the-job is most effective. These areas also contribute to attrition among novices, who are overwhelmed by the demands of teaching that are not successfully addressed.

Where among experienced teachers are there classes entirely free of problems with discipline and student motivation?

A study was conducted to view the experiences of 11 academically able teachers from the vantage point of their perceptions of their first four years of teaching. A qualitative design was used to identify the teachers’ concerns and the responses the teachers made to those concerns as they occurred in the teaching context. Satisfying aspects of the teachers’ work and factors that influenced decisions about remaining in the profession also were explored. Contextual factors and supportive relationships were identified as important components of the participants’ initial experiences.

In some cases, novices received more difficult assignments than their experienced peers. Difficult assignments included multiple preparations, extracurricular duties, “floating” from classroom to classroom, and working with disruptive students. Support provided by mentors and colleagues was another variable encountered during the early years of teaching. Administrators also were viewed as having important effects on the participants’ early years of teaching. The effects that the participants noted included evaluation and feedback, assignments, and assistance with disruptive students.

Concerns expressed by the teachers during their first year were consistent with those described in the literature. However, concerns identified by the teachers in later years focused primarily on their effect on students. This was consistent with the literature on stages of concerns. The teachers reported finding satisfaction in their work when they believed that they had had a positive influence on students. However, the teachers noted that workplace conditions such as low salaries, lack of mobility, isolation, and negative co-workers also affected their decision making about staying in the profession.

Mentoring is being used to revitalize the nation’s schools. Beginning with the private sector, mentoring has now crossed the threshold of the school door in order to enhance the quality of faculties. Research concerning the effects of mentoring on excellence in education is increasing. However, there is not yet a consistent definition of mentoring grounded in theory.

A proposed definition of mentoring is grounded in developmental-contextual theory. It “incorporates the notions that stage denotes a qualitatively distinct
level of organization and that context both influences the organism’s development and is changed by it.” Mentoring is a “dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment” between a mentor and a beginning teacher, aimed at promoting the career development of both. This definition qualitatively distinguishes mentoring from supervision and teaching. It implies an imparting of approaches to applications of the knowledge of the craft (teaching) from the mentor to the teacher. Established mentorships with no clear connection to theory or practice trivialize the mentoring process.

Formal programs using this developmental-contextual definition of mentoring found that these mentors cited, as benefits of mentoring, collegiality, a positive sense of efficacy, and the opportunity to have a broader impact. Studies show that beginning teachers as well as mentors can be transformed through the contextual-developmental definition of mentoring. This definition can advance research as well as practice by providing directions and understanding of adult development.

Needs of Novice Teachers and Clinical Mentors

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New Kentucky Teachers’ Feedback on Their Preparation

Abstracted from “New Teachers Say They Are Well Prepared: Study in Kentucky Reveals Progress; NCATE a Factor,” by Arthur E. Wise, 1997, Quality Teaching (Newsletter of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education), 6(Spring), 1–2.

In a recent study, a majority of Kentucky’s new teachers reported that they felt their college and university education had prepared them well for teaching. Ninety percent said they were well prepared, very well prepared, or moderately well prepared to establish a positive learning environment, communicate high expectations, design developmentally appropriate instruction, use different teaching strategies for different instructional purposes, and communicate the core concepts of their discipline.

The sample included more than 1,000 public school teachers and 125 principals. About 70 percent of the principals said that these teachers were better prepared than they themselves had been trained. Ninety-four percent of the teachers graduated from NCATE-accredited institutions in 1996. The areas in
which these teachers felt well prepared were the standards that NCATE had targeted to improve during the teachers’ college years, and the areas in which the teachers felt less prepared were not yet NCATE standards during these teachers’ college years.

This study assessed learning, teaching, and development of ethical judgment and problem solving in rural beginning teachers. Eleven beginners were assigned to mentors who received one year of training for their role, and 10 beginners were assigned to buddies who received only an orientation to their role. The beginners working with trained mentors showed strong trends in growth of ethical reasoning ability and significant gains in complex problem solving as measured by conceptual level. Further, these beginners expressed an interest in returning to the school system for their second year. Mentors in the training program showed significant changes in their mentoring style, becoming progressively less controlling (a direct style) and progressively more collaborative (an indirect style).

The study of which this publication is an executive summary looked at other countries to find answers to the question, What can be done to help new teachers succeed?

Up to one-third of new United States teachers leave the profession within the first few years. This can be blamed in part on the nation’s sink-or-swim attitude toward teacher induction. In contrast, new teachers in other countries are provided resources and guidance as they move from being students to being skilled teachers.

The research documents that teaching is not any easier in other parts of the world. However, some other countries appear to have put into practice strategies that help teachers through the tough first year. Although rooted in the unique characteristics of a particular country, successful teacher induction programs in the various countries have the following common characteristics:

1. New teachers are viewed as professionals on a continuum: novice teachers are not expected to do the same job as experienced teachers.
2. New teachers are nurtured and not left to discover on their own: interaction with mentors and other teachers is maximized.
3. Teacher induction is a purposive and valued activity; it is seen as “quality” rather than “quantity.”
4. All or most of the school’s staff cooperate in the development and nurturing of the new teacher.
5. Policy makers almost everywhere want to improve their teacher induction programs. In the United States, this study found, most induction programs stress assessment in order to prepare the new teachers for the evaluative process.

Over the past 20 years, there has been a decline in the number of minority teachers entering and remaining in the teaching profession. At the same time, the number of minority students in United States classrooms has been steadily increasing. In the Connecticut public schools, this phenomenon is no different: 27.8 percent of Connecticut’s public school students come from minority backgrounds, whereas only 6.3 percent of public school teachers do.

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of Connecticut first-year teachers and to add to the insufficient research on retention and attrition of first-year teachers in Connecticut school districts, minority teachers in particular. The study investigated Connecticut first-year teachers’ perceptions of the quality of their induction. A survey and three focus groups were used to collect data.
The results indicated that mentoring was the most beneficial component of induction for a large majority of first-year teachers and that socialization needed the most attention or improvement. Many problems that first-year teachers encountered were associated not with discipline, teacher evaluation, or how to teach, but with how to cope with the practical needs of everyday classroom life.

This study extends research on teacher induction and collegiality, addressing the primary question, What are the perceptions of first-year English literacy teachers regarding the contributions of collegiality to their growth as teachers? The author’s contrasting educational and professional experiences in Malaysia and the United States give the study a cross-cultural flavor.

The contributions of the study to knowledge about teacher induction and collegiality include the following: (1) Regardless of first-year teachers’ common experiences in preservice teacher education programs, there was great variance in their perceptions of their growth. This was strongly linked to their perceptions of workplace collegiality. (2) Within the first-year teachers’ schools, subject panels provided permanent structures for formal continuing teacher induction, benefiting beginning and experienced teachers alike. (3) A contextualized model of collegiality emerges, emphasizing three dimensions.

A qualitative study was conducted to investigate the socialization that first-year teachers experienced in their schools. The findings established that new teachers depended on external forces to gain satisfaction from and acceptance in their roles. They were unable to derive satisfaction from their jobs because they were not ready for the full responsibility of teaching. Teachers were unlikely to remain in the profession if they were unable to derive satisfaction from their work. Preservice education was unable to prepare teachers fully for the complexity of the role. New teachers depended on their peers to help them learn how to teach and to teach them the norms of the workplace. When new teachers developed positive relationships with colleagues, they gained professional acceptance. Acceptance by their colleagues enabled new teachers to learn knowledge of their craft from other teachers. When new teachers acquired greater knowledge of their craft, they were able to derive increased satisfaction from their jobs.

A qualitative study of the organizational socialization of beginning teachers, examined the concerns of first-year teachers to determine whether the socialization they experienced influenced their concerns. In addition, the study investigated each participants’ influence on and participation in the organization. This was done to learn whether the beginning teachers were willing to participate in or influence the organization to a greater extent based on the organizational socialization they experienced.

The three study participants were involved in three different beginning teacher induction programs. The methods for collecting data were interviews, sentence stems, and cognitive maps constructed by the participants. The participants’ mentors and principals also were interviewed.

The study revealed that the beginning teachers generally were not formally socialized to schools as organizations. Most of their learning about the organization was random and occurred as a matter of happenstance. The concerns of the beginning teachers were primarily about self and task. The neophytes typically did not receive marked assistance with their concerns, except from
their mentors. Finally, the focus of beginning teachers was on the classroom; they did not actively participate outside their classrooms.

This study reports how teacher education graduates coped in their first year of teaching and compares beginners’ primary needs and concerns with those identified by Veenman in his review of the area in 1984. Seventy-eight first-year teachers in the Mesa (Arizona) Unified School District participated in the study. Forty-nine were mentored, 29 were not. Having a mentor was an option provided by the school system.

Results of the study included the following: (1) Classroom discipline, mentioned as the most important concern in the Veenman study, was ranked fifth by these teachers. Changes in teacher education programs may account for the difference. (2) In contrast, these teachers ranked individualizing instruction, listening, and finding needed resources as significantly important. (3) Additionally, these novices found the “demonstration classroom,” a bimonthly group meeting facilitated by a mentor, to be invaluable.

Mentors are an essential component of a broader program of teacher induction. They must be prepared to refer novices to other sources of assistance and support, rather than expecting to be the only providers of assistance.

In New Jersey, legislation mandating school district induction programs for certification of beginning teachers took effect in September 1993. Induction programs represent a recent effort to ensure that new teachers have the support and the skills to teach adequately. A study investigated whether induction programs make a difference by asking the question, What is the relationship between teacher induction programs and the performance of beginning teachers?

Findings are as follows: The performance ratings of the teachers in the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) and the teachers not in TIP were comparable in each of the instructional skill areas of the Teacher Performance Appraisal Survey. The mode and the mean ratings for both the TIP and the non–TIP teachers were found to be “above standard” to “well above standard.” The mean rating for all the teachers increased from the first observation to the third. Difference-of-means t-tests showed no significant differences in the performances of TIP and non–TIP teachers. Although some of the problems and the concerns of beginning teachers can be addressed in induction programs, such programs may not be the best strategy for improving instruction. Ongoing coaching and professional development will probably be needed to achieve that end.

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of selected working conditions of the beginning teacher on the decision to remain in teaching. The conditions examined were collegial relationships, mentor relationships, classroom management assistance, communication skills for use with parents, discipline planning, time management skills, supervision by the site administrator, and selected content of new teacher induction programs. Data came from a questionnaire mailed to a sample of teachers in two southern California counties.

The support offered to beginning teachers by mentor or experienced teachers was identified by both beginning and experienced teachers as having the strongest effect on their decision to remain in teaching. Positive acceptance and support of the beginning teacher by the teaching staff also was identified as having a strong effect on the decision. Thus, beginning teachers need the support offered by mentor and experienced teachers.
The central question of this yearlong investigation into the experiences of 15 beginning teachers was, How do beginning teachers understand their first year of teaching and the nature of their learning during that period? A related question was, How, if at all, do beginning teachers perceive the influence of past life experiences on their first year of teaching?

Findings indicated that these beginners passed through four phases of experience in their first year of teaching: euphoria, losing balance, gaining a foothold, and gaining balance. As respondents moved through these phases, they described two types of ongoing learning experiences: role related and colleague related. Beginners learned by using past life experiences (through the process of reflection) and formal and informal mentors as learning resources. Implications of these findings focused on the value of modifying teacher induction and teacher education practices to include the use of past life experiences, and the establishment of “helping communities” of supportive colleagues for the beginning teacher.

Teaching is unique among the professions in often requiring beginning teachers to assume full responsibilities from their first day on the job. During the crucial period of initial adjustment, beginners frequently need formative assistance that will facilitate their professional success. Beginning-teacher assistance programs attempt to address this need. Such assistance is intended to (1) benefit beginners by providing them with a personal introduction to teaching, (2) assist beginners in implementing sound teaching practices, and (3) increase the retention of beginners. This study focused on the third intended benefit of assistance by exploring the question, Do variables associated with beginning teacher assistance, demographics, job-related characteristics, and motivation to enter teaching correlate with teacher retention? Surveys were mailed to a sample.

Descriptive results differed from those of existing literature in that (1) beginning teacher retention and high measured intelligence of the teacher were positively correlated and (2) beginning teacher attrition occurred at a lower rate than in previous studies. These results favored induction assistance.

A draft of new standards for professional development schools is being circulated by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. “Connections” readers are encouraged to obtain the complete document and offer comments on it. The document is available on the Internet at www.ncate.org. Following are excerpts from the introduction:

Our goal was to develop institutional standards for PDSs . . . Several considerations framed our work. The first is the formative nature of PDSs—they are in the process of being developed, and as such, they are vulnerable institutions . . . Therefore, the PDS Standards Project sought to create standards that could achieve a delicate balance in serving two important functions:

• to identify the distinguishing characteristics of PDSs; and
• to support the development of quality PDSs.

Our second consideration was the unique position that PDSs occupy—at the juncture between teacher education and school reform . . . Practices and programs in PDSs should be consistent with developing standards for new teachers (i.e., INTASC Standards) and for highly accomplished practice (i.e., National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) . . .

Our third consideration was to have the standards address what is unique and what is necessary in PDSs . . . There are some core commitments which are specific to the PDS: (1) an environment which integrates adult and
children’s learning; (2) parity for university and school partners on all issues of practice and policy in the PDS; and (3) the simultaneous renewal of the school and the university...

The ... standards are framed in terms of critical attributes of a PDS. A standard is identified for each critical attribute. An examiner would find the standards to be met in a highly developed PDS. Several indicators are provided for each standard, all of which would be present in a highly developed site. Each indicator is accompanied by a set of examples—what might be seen or heard or found in a PDS site as evidence that the indicator is being addressed...

The standards are written for the critical attributes and not for each of the four functions (teacher preparation, staff development, research, student learning) to stress the integration of these functions. Each critical attribute is relevant to each core function of the PDS. For example, collaboration between partners is expected and is characteristic of all aspects of preservice teacher education, staff development, identification and implementation of a research agenda, and diagnosing and meeting children’s needs. Similarly, all four functions are supported by the learning community: quality assurance and accountability is expected with reference to teaching, learning, and learning to teach, and in the conduct and use of research; equity applies to all functions; and organization, roles and structures are designed to support the integration of these functions.

Finally, the standards address what are believed to be the necessary resources or inputs and processes that are associated with creating PDS settings and which are believed to be necessary to support the desired outcomes. Performance standards and desired outcomes appropriate for university and school faculty, teacher candidates, and children are identified.