

R&D

AN LEARNER

HOW TO
SUPPORT

Beginning Teachers: LOOKING BEYOND OUR BORDERS

It's no secret that too many new teachers leave the profession almost as soon as they enter it. Often, the least-experienced teachers are placed in the most-troubled schools, where support from administrators and other teachers is limited at best. It's sink or swim — and many teachers sink fast. Indeed, 11 percent of teachers in the United States quit after just one year, 21 percent after two years, and 39 percent after five years.

To help stem the tide, 38 states now require or encourage districts to create induction or mentoring programs for new teachers. That's good news. Less good: We have a long way to catch up with the progress made by other countries in supporting new teachers.

"It makes sense to look outside our borders for ideas and models," says Edward Britton, co-principal investigator of a recent WestEd study examining how five countries provide new middle and high school teachers with substantial, ongoing support.

The three-year study, to be co-published as *Comprehensive Teacher Induction: Systems for Early Career Learning* by WestEd and Kluwer Academic Publishers, was funded by the National Science Foundation. Britton and Senta Raizen of WestEd, with collaboration from Lynn Paine and David Pimm of Michigan State University, looked at five countries: France, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, and China (specifically the city of Shanghai). All have long-established support systems for novice teachers.

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F R O M T H E
CEO

Starting a new school year can be exhilarating — beginning a new profession even more so. In their first years on the job, new teachers bring enthusiasm and fresh ideas to the classroom. But in order to become the most effective and skillful classroom leaders they can be — to provide the education students deserve — beginning teachers need guidance and support.

FROM NEW TEACHERS TO
BEST TEACHERS

Too often, however, beginning teachers are given a school's most challenging classes. And regardless of their responsibilities, these same new teachers receive little or no guidance once they're on the job. Such conditions tend to push talented individuals away from teaching. Many administrators struggle to fill teacher vacancies only to have their new hires leave within a few years.

There are, however, good models in development and use. Some schools and districts now offer their newest teachers the support and guidance they need to provide a high-quality education for all students. With initiatives like California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (see article on page 9) and the federal No Child Left Behind Act, policymakers and others increasingly are turning their attention to this important matter.

This issue of *R&D Alert* shares ideas and lessons from WestEd's work in supporting and guiding new teachers. The lead article draws on a recent, three-year study coled by researchers from WestEd's National Center for Improving Science Education and from Michigan State University. It examines programs in several other countries that provide extensive, ongoing support for beginning instructors.

Other articles focus on successful induction practices within the United States. One describes the elements of a strong state-level program, based on a multiyear evaluation by WestEd's Evaluation Research Program. Another article describes effective practices for providing support to new teachers of English language learners. Other articles highlight two of the most fundamental and successful methods for supporting new teachers: mentoring and classroom-based professional development.

We hope you find these research-based ideas and practices helpful for developing a sound approach to new teacher induction. For more information about our work in this area, please contact us or visit our Web site: WestEd.org.

Glen H. Harvey
Chief Executive Officer

POLISHING THE

STONE

Many people remember the formula: density = mass/volume. Some even recall that density is expressed in gms/cm³. But beyond the formula, what does it take to really *understand* density? Such questioning is at the core of WestEd's Teaching-Learning Collaborative (TLC).

Originally part of the Science Partnerships for Articulation and Networking (SPAN), funded by the National Science Foundation, the TLC is a classroom-based support project in which teams of beginning and veteran teachers work together on effective science lesson design.

The process benefits both experienced and new teachers by focusing on the core content of teaching and learning. "Unlike coaching, the TLC is not one-on-one and does not focus on the teacher," says Kathy DiRanna, Director of WestEd's K-12 Alliance, which incorporates the TLC process. "Instead, the focus is on lesson design and its effectiveness at getting at student understanding."

Facilitated by TLC staff, four-person teams conceptualize the student goals of a given lesson, one that usually ties in with the regular curriculum. The team then goes into the classroom and implements the lesson, with each member teaching part of it, while others act as observers. Following the session, they evaluate its effectiveness by looking at student work and then redesign the lesson to improve student understanding. The redesigned lesson is immediately taught to a new classroom, evidence of student learning is analyzed, and the team reflects on the lesson's effectiveness. Over the school year, participants engage in five

of these sessions, in addition to an intense summer academy.

The process — design, teach, debrief, redesign, and reteach — is sometimes referred to as "polishing the stone" because it is a continuous process of honing and improvement.

While sharpening their skills, beginning teachers are immersed in and see themselves as part of a learning community. "New teachers are often isolated, the new kids on the block," says DiRanna. "In this project, you don't have to earn a badge before you

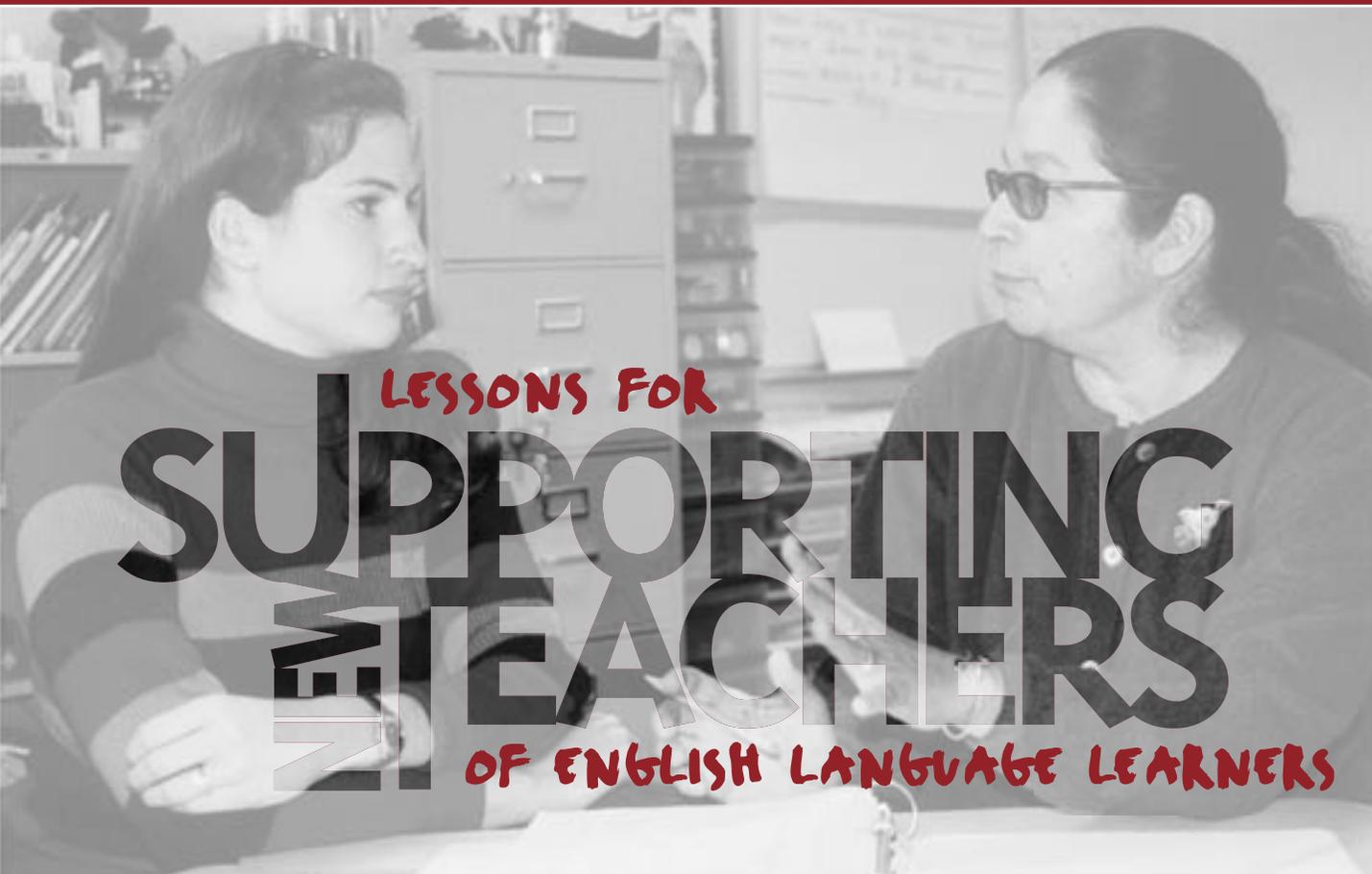
WestEd's Teaching-Learning COLLABORATIVE

can contribute." She notes that beginning teachers frequently bring in new methodologies from which veteran teachers can learn, while reaping the benefits of the more experienced teachers' classroom skills.

Further, the TLC reinforces the importance of lifelong learning. Says DiRanna, "This collaborative shows educators that we are lifelong professionals — we can all improve and challenge ourselves no matter where we are in the teaching cycle."

Now in its seventh year, the collaborative has met with great enthusiasm from teacher participants, who currently come from about 150 schools across California. As returning participant Robert Perez from the Pomona Unified School District remarks, "I often wonder how kids with teachers who do not have this opportunity are able to learn." While formal evaluation of the TLC is in the early stages, anecdotal evidence and student data from science assessments developed by WestEd's Partnership for the Assessment of Standards-based Science indicate that students are benefiting greatly as well. The approach has been replicated on a small scale for mathematics and could extend to other content areas as well. **W**

For more
information,
contact
DiRanna at
714.438.3806 or
kdirann@WestEd.org.



LESSONS FOR SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

While teachers today are asked to help an increasingly diverse student population reach the highest standards, many face an additional challenge: helping students learn English as a second language. Overwhelmed, many beginning teachers struggle, move to districts with less diversity, or drop out of the profession.

But the outlook is not bleak everywhere. *Exemplary Professional Development for Teachers of English Language Learners*, a recent report by WestEd researchers Aída Walqui and Yuri Kuwahara, details the success of California's Santa Cruz New Teacher Project (SCNTP) and New York City's International High School (IHS). Both promote the expertise of beginning teachers who serve students from diverse backgrounds.

The SCNTP, which offers support and professional development for new teachers and their mentors, boasts new teacher retention rates of 94 percent eight years after induction. What's more, the students of SCNTP teachers have significantly improved student reading levels compared with students of non-SCNTP teachers. At IHS, the majority of students score poorly on English proficiency tests when they begin at the high school. Yet, the school has maintained student retention, attendance, graduation, and college acceptance rates above 90 percent for the past 14 years.

Walqui and Kuwahara identified several common elements that contribute to these successes:

English language learner (ELL) focus: A focus on ELL issues is a key ingredient of success at SCNTP and IHS. SCNTP, for example, includes an English Language Learner Institute, seminars, and frequent meetings between beginning teachers and advisors. All of these elements emphasize equity issues and strategies for working with ELLs.

For more information on *Exemplary Professional Development for Teachers of English Language Learners*, contact Kuwahara at 562.799.5111 or ykuwaha@WestEd.org.

Pedagogical support: Many new teachers of ELLs tend to simplify their teaching, assuming that students' English abilities will limit their learning of subject matter. SCNTP and IHS take a very different approach. They recognize that ELL instruction must simultaneously address English language development *and* subject matter content. To do this, veteran teachers and advisors work closely with new teachers in planning and teaching lessons geared to ELLs.

Individualized support: As with many other students, the needs of ELLs vary. Teachers at IHS receive individual mentoring from veteran teachers and from participating in interdisciplinary teams that focus on instruction appropriate for the school's student population. Based on the experiences of both SCNTP and IHS, responding to individual students' abilities and needs is both the most challenging aspect of teaching ELLs and the most important.

Native language development: Both SCNTP and IHS view students' native languages as assets in their learning, rather than detriments. They help new teachers learn how to strengthen each student's native language while also developing their academic English. "Learning is the key to language development," says Eric Nadelstern, former principal of IHS. "You definitely don't want to separate those two things by assuming that kids are going to learn language in this class, and they're going to learn content in another class. Those have to be well-integrated."

Program participants are enthusiastic about their progress. In the words of one, the participants are "transforming the very culture" of teaching — and not just for new teachers of ELLs. Indeed, the principles of SCNTP and IHS have been adapted at sites nationwide. **W**

(continued from page 1)

"In New Zealand, for example, they've had a good program for more than 25 years," says Britton. The countries have maintained programs even during periods of teacher oversupply, he says, because "they believe that supporting beginners is critical."

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

The new teacher support programs of these countries are not all alike, but they do share certain characteristics:

- New teachers have multiple induction providers, more than the single mentor typically provided by programs in the United States.
- Induction is ongoing, typically lasting two years or more, and tends to be part of larger professional development programs.
- In addition to helping with classroom-management concerns, always important to beginning teachers, the induction programs help teachers learn more about how to teach their subjects, assess student understanding, and work effectively with parents.
- The programs serve all new teachers, not just some.
- Government, state, or local education agencies fully fund the programs.

HOW NEW ZEALAND SUPPORTS BEGINNING TEACHERS

In the 15 schools that researchers visited in New Zealand, new teachers encounter "help in every direction," as Britton puts it. The country's forward-thinking approach to teacher induction is the result of "a cultural belief in the importance and worth of supporting young professionals.... Players at all levels of the system assume that new teachers have particular needs and that the system must pay explicit attention to addressing them," says Britton.

New Zealand's state ministry of education requires that schools provide first-year teachers with 20 percent release time, paid for by the government. Typically, new teachers are assigned four classes rather than five, which gives them three to five more free periods a week than their more experienced colleagues. And unlike what often happens in the United States, new teachers are usually not assigned to the most difficult classes.

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About 15 years ago, the retention rate for new teachers in Rochester, New York, soared from 65 to 91 percent. Ever since, the Rochester City School District has maintained a retention rate of 86 percent, much higher than the national average. One of the main reasons for the district's success? A mentoring program for beginning teachers.

Rochester's mentoring program is just one of over a dozen successful models that Susan Villani, Senior Program Associate with Learning Innovations at WestEd, details in her recently published book, *Mentoring Programs for New Teachers: Models of Induction and Support*.

Mentoring has taken on increasing importance as the nation faces a serious teacher shortage — an estimated 2.5 million positions to fill in the next 10 years. Furthermore, attrition rates average about 30 percent nationally, even higher in urban areas. Although many districts have successfully used mentoring to help address this challenge, not everyone has gotten the message. "Unfortunately, some schools see a men-

toring program as a luxury because they are asked to do additional work," says Villani. "But the real question here is how can we afford *not* to have a mentoring program?"

Mentoring can help make new teachers feel good about staying in the profession, while also improving their teaching skills. "A mentor can be a friendly buddy, there to offer emotional support," says Villani, "or a trained facilitator who has initiated a full-range, deep mentoring program."

Villani's book outlines four kinds of mentoring support:

- emotional support and encouragement;
- information about the daily workings of the school and the cultural norms of the school community;

- cultural proficiency regarding students and their families; and
- cognitive coaching, which involves collecting and sharing data from classroom observations and “asking thoughtful questions that promote reflection.”

To be effective, says Villani, mentors need support themselves. They need to enhance their knowledge and skills about mentoring and cognitive coaching. In addition, the school needs to provide structures that support mentoring relationships, including time for teachers to meet and observe each other’s classroom.

The Northern New England Co-Mentoring Network is an example of a partnership offering this kind of support. Funded by the National Science Foundation, the project brings together Maine’s Math and Science Alliance, the Vermont Institute for Science, Math and Technology, the New Hampshire Science and Teachers Coalition, and WestEd. According to Susan Mundry, WestEd Senior Research Associate, these partners recruit science and math mentor teachers, who then learn strategies for coaching and models for helping beginning teachers improve their standards-based teaching. Mundry explains that, as a network-based system, the project is “designed to build a learning community among the mentors, those mentored, and resource people who work with them.”

Although important, “mentoring in itself is not a panacea for the teacher shortage,” notes Mundry, but must be part of a

MENTORING HAS TAKEN ON INCREASING IMPORTANCE AS THE NATION FACES A SERIOUS TEACHER SHORTAGE — AN ESTIMATED 2.5 MILLION POSITIONS TO FILL IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS.

comprehensive approach to teacher induction. The recently released *Comprehensive Teacher Induction: Systems for Early Career Learning*, from WestEd’s National Center for Improving Science Education and Michigan State University, indicates that many countries outside of the United States already see mentoring as just one piece of the teacher induction puzzle. (See the cover story of this newsletter.)

“In many overseas induction programs, the teachers receive a broad range of support services — it’s far more than just one-on-one mentoring,” says WestEd’s Edward Britton, a co-author of the study. “For example, in Switzerland and New Zealand, there are Facilitated Peer Mentoring programs that allow new teachers to help each other solve problems with the assistance of a trained facilitator.” Groups of four to six teachers meet weekly with similar groups from other schools, expanding their guidance beyond what can be provided by only a single mentor within their own school.

With research demonstrating their importance, mentoring programs are indeed key to helping address the needs of our new teachers. **W**

For more information, contact Villani at 781.481.1112 or svillani@WestEd.org; Mundry at 978.465.9360 or smundry@WestEd.org; or Britton at 650.381.6416 or tbritto@WestEd.org.

To order *Mentoring Programs for New Teachers* or *Comprehensive Teacher Induction*, see page 10 of this newsletter and the product order insert.

STATEWIDE SUPPORT:

Evaluating California's



Program

Faced with the reality that the first years of teaching are often so difficult that many new teachers opt to throw in the towel, California in 1992 launched a formal induction effort known as the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Program. The concept was to equip first- and second-year educators with the tools and support they need not only to survive — but to thrive — in their new profession. And, according to a recent study conducted by WestEd, the program is making a difference.

“Prior to BTSA, California’s teacher turnover rate was about 50 percent within the first five years,” says WestEd’s Naida Tushnet, who recently spearheaded the first-ever independent evaluation of BTSA. “Now, we’re retaining about 90 percent of credentialed teachers in the first two years.”

Based on these dramatic results, other states may want to adopt similar programs. According to WestEd’s report, elements of a strong, statewide induction program include:

- veteran educators who can serve as mentors to new teachers and provide them with professional development activities to nurture their skills;

- a framework that allows new teachers to analyze their skills and make the necessary adjustments (California’s framework is embodied in the California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers, which promotes a four-step process known as “Plan-Teach-Reflect-Apply”); and

- support for mentors in the form of training, regional events, and regular meetings.

“There’s an amazing sense of community among the people who work in various roles,” says Tushnet. “They have a common understanding.” This is no small feat considering the size and scope of the program. Nearly 23,000 beginning teachers were involved in BTSA during the 2000–01 school year, and that number continues to grow.

In fact, Tushnet warns that California may “run out” of quality teachers to serve as mentors. The BTSA evaluation identified several other drawbacks as well. Some BTSA projects are too geographically dispersed to provide rural teachers the level of service they need. And because BTSA is available only for credentialed teachers, many educators are being left out. During the 2000–01 school year, there were 42,427 non-fully credentialed teachers in California classrooms.

Although BTSA turnover rates are low, the report points out that there aren’t enough data to determine its long-

THE CONCEPT WAS TO EQUIP
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range effects on teacher retention. But in the short-term, the impact is positive, especially in urban and high-poverty communities, where getting teachers to stay can be most difficult. The study found that programs serving high-poverty districts retained nearly 95 percent of first-year teachers, while similar efforts in low-poverty districts yielded a retention rate of just under 90 percent.

Currently, BTSA is a voluntary program, but a new policy expected to take effect in 2003 will require all newly credentialed teachers to participate in an induction program approved by the state. For some of these teachers who've already been in the classroom for years, the induction program may seem irrelevant and unnecessary, and BTSA may be forced to revamp its structure, according to the report.

Funded by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and jointly administered by the commission and California Department of Education, the study will likely lead to additional research into the effect of BTSA on new teacher quality.

For more information, contact Tushnet at 562.799.5118 or ntushne@WestEd.org. 

(continued from page 5)

In addition, all schools in New Zealand must develop an "Advice and Guidance" (AG) program for new teachers. As part of the program, novice teachers are assigned one primary mentor, usually the department head. They are also provided other support, including "buddy" teachers and, in the case of science teachers, laboratory technicians. Every school has an AG coordinator who convenes new teachers regularly, typically every two weeks, to discuss whatever practical, emotional, or other needs the teachers are grappling with. New teachers in most of the countries studied also meet with their counterparts from other schools.

BRINGING THE LESSONS HOME TO THE U.S.

Britton believes the programs described in *Comprehensive Teacher Induction* offer models for what induction can be. This research is prompting "a re-think of policies, programs, and practices for teacher induction" in this country, adds Raizen.

The study's findings already have helped inform national dialogue. Midway through the study, researchers were asked to brief former Senator John Glenn's National Commission on Teaching Mathematics and Science in the 21st Century on their findings and suggestions for how to make U.S. teacher induction programs more effective. (The briefing led to a paper, *More Swimming, Less Sinking*, available online at www.WestEd.org/online_pubs/teacherinduction).

Britton is pleased that educators and policymakers in this country are beginning to address the issue and hopes to see more programs go beyond the narrow practice of mentoring. "Meeting the wide-ranging needs of new teachers requires a comprehensive teacher induction program," he says. "And it requires resources — it can't just be an unfunded mandate."

For more information, contact Britton at 650.381.6416 or tbritto@WestEd.org. 



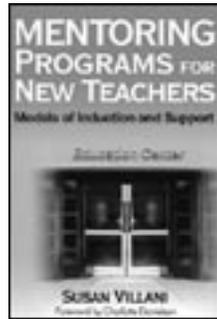
Career-Long Teacher Development: Policies That Make Sense (Knowledge Brief)

Joan McRobbie, *WestEd*, 2000

Based on a presentation by Linda Darling-Hammond, this Knowledge Brief underscores the direct relationship of teacher knowledge and skills to student achievement. Arguing that no efforts or resources are better spent than on ensuring high-quality teaching, the brief calls for a standards-based teacher development system that encompasses the full span of a teaching career — from recruitment and preparation, through certification and induction, and on through a teacher's career.

8 pages / Price: \$8 /
Order #: KN-00-03

For ordering information,
please refer to the
product order insert.



Mentoring Programs for New Teachers: Models of Induction and Support

Susan Villani, *Corwin Press*, 2002

Mentoring expert Susan Villani offers ways in which schools, teacher associations, institutions of higher education, educational collaboratives, and state departments of education can support teachers with the right mentoring program for their needs. Villani's book details over a dozen models of mentoring and induction — including district- and state-level programs — and covers program design, funding, and other issues.

264 pages / Price: \$29.95 / Order #: LI-01-01

WestEd Resources

ON SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS

Many WestEd resources address issues related to supporting new teachers. A few are summarized here. For additional related products, please refer to the *WestEd Resource Catalog 2002* (see p. 11 of this newsletter for more information).



Lifelines to the Classroom: Designing Support for Beginning Teachers (Knowledge Brief)

Joy Zimmerman & Kendyll Stansbury, *WestEd*, 2000

This Knowledge Brief provides a rationale for giving explicit support to new teachers, identifies the critical challenges they face, and describes key elements of low-intensity and high-intensity support programs. The brief is aimed at state departments of education, local superintendents, and principals looking to develop or refine a support program to raise retention rates for newly minted educators and help them become more effective classroom teachers.

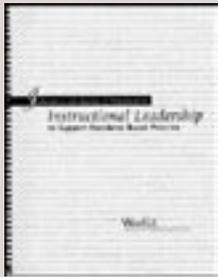
16 pages / Price: \$8 / Order #: KN-00-01

Upcoming book on teacher induction....

Comprehensive Teacher Induction: Systems for Early Career Learning

Edward Britton, Lynn Paine, David Pimm, & Senta Raizen, *Kluwer Academic Publishers & WestEd*, in press

With National Science Foundation support, researchers from WestEd's National Center for Improving Science Education and Michigan State University conducted an in-depth study of the induction programs in China (Shanghai), France, Japan, New Zealand, and Switzerland. The resulting book calls for rethinking what teacher induction is about, whom it should serve, what the "curriculum" of induction should be, and the policies, programs, and practices needed to deliver it. For information about this book or the research study, contact co-author Edward Britton at 650.381.6416 or tbritto@WestEd.org.

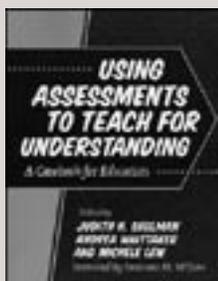


Isolation is the Enemy of Improvement: Instructional Leadership to Support Standards-Based Practice

Kate Jamentz, *WestEd*, 2002

In addition to articulating the specific teaching skills needed for standards-based instruction, this book presents two annotated classroom vignettes illustrating them. It then describes the types of learning experiences teachers need for acquiring or refining these skills and explains how instructional leaders can facilitate such opportunities. The book includes tools for guiding instructional leaders and teachers as they focus on standards-driven lesson planning and/or reflect on the effectiveness of those lessons.

138 pages / Price: \$20 / Order #: WAC-02-01



Using Assessments to Teach for Understanding: A Casebook for Educators

Judith H. Shulman, Andrea Whittaker, & Michele Lew, *Teachers College Press*, 2002

This latest collection of teacher-developed cases from WestEd's Institute for Case Development gives educators the opportunity to collaboratively analyze and reflect

on issues such as the role of assessment in teaching and learning; designing, using, and interpreting assessments that foster student learning; and incorporating assessments into standards-based instruction. The cases feature experiences from elementary, middle school, dual-language, and special education classrooms. This volume is accompanied by a facilitator's guide.

140 pages / Price: \$21.95 / Order #: PD-02-01



Improving Districts: Systems That Support Learning

WestEd, 2002

What can be learned from school districts that have been able to show improvement — not only in a few schools but throughout the whole district? This report, commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education, examines nine districts honored for their demonstrated outcomes and practices by the department's National Awards Program for Model Professional Development. The report describes how these districts conceptualize and structure teacher professional development, the role of vision and communication in moving a whole district into continuous improvement, staff roles and structures, and how data-driven decision-making helps these districts initiate their change efforts and keep them on track.

64 pages / Price: \$9.95 / Order #: ID-02-01

WestEd Resource Catalog For a free copy, email dtorres@WestEd.org; call 415.565.3000 or toll-free, (877) 4-WestEd; or write: WestEd / 730 Harrison Street / San Francisco, CA / 94107-1242. The catalog is also available at www.WestEd.org/catalog.

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>> What Research Says About Small Classes and Their Effects (Policy Perspectives)

Bruce J. Biddle & David C. Berliner, *WestEd*, 2002

This report answers key questions on class size: What research has appeared on class size to date? What findings have surfaced and how can we explain those findings? Why have those findings provoked controversy? And, what should we conclude about class-size policies based on the research? The report is part of a series funded by the Rockefeller Foundation entitled, *In Pursuit of Better Schools: What Research Says*.

Price: Single copy, free / Order #: PP-02-01 (Also available at WestEd.org/online_pubs/small_classes.pdf)

For ordering information, please refer to the product order insert.

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Chief Executive Officer
Glen Harvey

Chief Planning &
Communications Officer
Max McConkey

R&D Alert Executive Editor
Colleen Montoya

R&D Alert Editor
Noel White

Contributors
Glen Harvey
David Hill

Richard Horrmann

Andrea Jachman

Yuri Kuwahara

Cybèle Elaine Werts

Copy Editors

Rosemary De La Torre

Nimfa Rueda

Graphic Designer

Christian Holden

Photographer

Ed Aust

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