

CHAPTER 1

APEC TEACHER INDUCTION STUDY: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Teacher induction programs provide beginning teachers the support needed during the often difficult transition from preservice education to actual classroom teaching—from students of teaching to teachers of students. In Phase I of the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Teacher Preparation and Professional Development Study, members cited teacher induction as a major area of focus for future studies of education policy. Although widely perceived to have a positive impact on new teachers and the education system as a whole, such programs are relatively new, and members are seeking information with which to guide, refine, and justify this important endeavor.

As noted in the first report, members are increasingly concerned about the quality of the teaching force and its ability to bring students successfully into the 21st century with the technological and problem-solving skills to compete in a global economy. Since most members view the first year of teaching as critical to teachers' development, programs that target beginning teachers are beneficial to the development of a quality teaching force and the achievement of broader goals. Corollary to this, in many members, teacher retention is an important issue; teacher induction programs, by assisting teachers to become competent in their jobs and providing personal or professional support, may help increase retention.

The purpose of the APEC Teacher Induction Study is to describe practices of teacher induction across members and to provide members with detailed information about selected models that are viewed as successful. In other words, this report intends to inform members on existing practices while highlighting those that may be considered “best practices.” This introductory chapter briefly describes the background and methodology of the study and the vocabulary of teacher induction.

The following chapters discuss the findings of the APEC Teacher Induction Study. The second chapter is a cross-member comparison of basic programs, with brief summaries of teacher induction programs in each individual member that participated in the study. The observations, facts, and analysis within the second chapter are based on responses to an exploratory survey. The following three chapters analyze, in detail, the teacher induction programs in each of three case study sites. The final chapter brings together the lessons learned and remaining challenges from both the brief preliminary look and the in-depth analysis of the case studies—the Northern Territory of Australia, Japan, and New Zealand.

Methodology

A planning group comprising Federal government staff and other experts from the lead member (United States) met in November 1994 to formulate a research design for the APEC Teacher Induction Study. The group decided that the project should focus both on aspects of the structure of the educational system and historical-cultural factors that affect teacher induction, and prominent features of successful practices or models of induction. The study was designed with two major components: Part I, the exploratory survey, and Part II, the case studies. The exploratory survey would compile a broad base of information about “typical” and “successful” models as well as background information relevant to understanding teacher induction. The case studies (with sites selected based on the information gathered in Part I) would collect and analyze more detailed information about teacher induction models that are viewed as successful.

Part I: The Exploratory Survey

The purpose of Part I of the APEC Teacher Induction Study was to identify and describe the different models of induction or induction practices currently in use in each participating APEC member, thus providing an overview of practice in 11 members and the necessary background with which to refine the research protocols and select sites for further exploration. Preliminary work consisted of a literature review and interviews with expert consultants in the area of teacher preparation and development. From the knowledge gained during the preliminary stage and following,

where possible, the research questions proposed at the Washington, D.C., meeting (see Appendix A), research staff for the lead member designed a brief exploratory survey (see Appendix B).

The survey, *Exploratory Survey of APEC Members on Teacher Induction*, had 31 open-ended questions in eight issue areas: general strategies, programs and practices, participation, mentors or guidance teachers, government policies, financing, outcomes, and future plans. The respondents for the survey were either Education Forum representatives or issue-area experts for each APEC member. The survey was administered in the summer of 1995. By the end of data collection (August 1995), 11 responses had been received.

Research staff summarized the responses and cataloged them by issue areas. This allowed greater ease in comparison of features across APEC member teacher induction programs—as the survey responses later identified potential sites for the case studies. Finally, staff briefly summarized all the information into one table (see Appendix C), highlighting a particularly promising or identifiable aspect of teacher induction in each member, and sent it to all members for their verification and approval. Further, responses to the exploratory survey were synthesized into the brief descriptions of practice in each member that appear in Chapter 2.

Part II: The Case Studies

The second part of the APEC Teacher Induction Study, the case studies, was to take a more in-depth look at several teacher induction models that appeared to offer the potential of providing APEC members with descriptions of particularly interesting and diverse approaches to teacher induction. The case studies involved several steps: selection of sites, development of protocols, site visits and data collection, and analysis and reporting of data.

Selection of Sites. Federal officials and other research staff from the lead member initiated the selection of up to four members to be recommended to the Education Forum as sites for the case studies. The original criterion for selection, established by the planning group, was that the program studied should be well-implemented for

several years. The exploratory survey informed other criteria, such as perceived success (increased teacher retention or improved professional skills) and diversity (originality of approach or service to diverse populations). Originally six sites were under consideration as case study sites. Upon discussion and advice from the expert consultants, it was decided that the six would be narrowed to three case studies. Brief descriptions and potential merits for a study of the teacher induction programs in the proposed sites were mailed to members, and members were asked to approve selection.

The three sites finally selected were Australia's Northern Territory, Japan, and New Zealand. These sites were chosen because each has a well-implemented program of some duration that can inform other members on successful models of teacher induction. Also, the teacher induction programs in each of these sites differ on such key variables as level of governance from which they operate (the provincial level in Australia, and the member level in Japan and the school level in New Zealand), and the culture—both among the three sites chosen (with Eastern and Western examples) and within them (with the Aboriginal and Maori populations of Australia's Northern Territory and New Zealand, respectively).

There were features of specific interest in each of the sites, as well. The *Northern Territory of Australia's* system of teacher induction focuses on improving support and teacher retention, especially in the more isolated areas and in those areas with predominantly Aboriginal schools. Features of the program include a series of in-services and orientations at the regional and school level, an extensive peer probation system that both evaluates new teacher progress and provides emotional and professional support, and extensive central office support. “Strangers in their Own Country,” Chapter 3 of this report, explores the practice and features of teachers induction in the Northern Territory.

Japan demonstrates a strong commitment to the professional development of teachers. Its induction program is marked by close contact with new teachers, a strong mentoring system, and support time for planning, collaboration, and the general sharing of ideas. Japan was chosen for its strong national ethic regarding professional

development and induction. See Chapter 4, “The Training Year,” for an elaboration on the components and practice of Japan’s teacher induction program.

New Zealand provides an interesting case study, for its teacher induction program is ongoing and part of a two-year period of provisional teaching. New Zealand uses an advice and guidance program, which relies heavily on release-time for the support and development of beginning teachers. There is a national framework for teacher induction, with programs implemented and tailored at the individual school level. “Teacher Induction in an Era of Education Reform,” Chapter 5 of this report, examines the teacher induction program of New Zealand as it functions at the individual and school level.

Development of Protocols. The second step in Part II was to develop the protocols to be used during the case studies. During October and November 1995 staff designed six sets of questions to be used as guidelines during the site visit interviews. Each set was for a different audience within the teacher induction system. The interviewer could tailor the interview questions to the site, upon review of background materials, to cover all relevant information sought in the general set of questions.

The six groups of respondents were: program administrators, school administrators, teachers involved in the delivery of service, teachers who recently completed the program, beginning teachers currently in the program, and teacher educators. The sets of questions posed to each audience differed slightly to capture a broad range of information from groups with different areas of knowledge or experience. However, there was some overlap of material in the protocols to verify answers across groups or to get a sense of any tensions in perspective. Some of the areas touched on in the various sets of protocols were: program features (e.g., implementation, goals, content), roles and responsibilities, program impact, adaptability and transferability, and general context. (See Appendix D.)

Site Visits and Data Collection. With the sites selected and protocols in development, the third step was to arrange and conduct the site visits. The lead member contacted the APEC representative in each of the selected sites to obtain the

host member's approval and to begin the process of ensuring the fullest possible access to information and personnel involved in teacher induction. Each site was asked to select a host researcher or researchers to assist the lead member researcher in conducting the site visits.

Before site work began, there was a two-day training session in Sydney, Australia, in November 1995. Host researchers and the U.S. researcher met to ensure that each group was using a common approach, had similar understandings of the goals and research questions, and would generate similarly designed reports. Site work in the three sites took place between late November 1995 and February 1996.

Each case study site visit lasted approximately eight days. Generally, the researchers met first with member-level officials (where applicable), then with provincial or regional officials, and finally with teachers and administrators at individual schools. Emphasis was placed on talking with a variety of professionals in as many schools and locales as possible to get a fuller understanding of the practice of teacher induction as a whole within the member. Both before and during the visits, researchers collected as much written material, background information, and hard data as was available to build their information base and for use in the final report.

Data Analysis and Reporting. The researchers from the lead member compiled the interview responses across groups of respondents into one, summary protocol, which allowed easier comparison. Using the summary protocol and materials gathered on site, the researchers analyzed the data and reported their findings in the three case study chapters included here. Particular attention was paid to what other members could learn from the models selected and any contextual factors required for or enhancing implementation. Also, researchers were careful to use program terminology particular to the member studied. For instance, persons who are generally defined as mentors in the overview of this document are called “tutor teachers” in New Zealand, “guidance teachers” or “subject specialists” in Japan, and “peer tutors” in Australia's Northern Territory; and this vocabulary was maintained in the case study reports to give a clearer picture of the scope of the job of each of these persons. Data

analysis and report preparation took place from December 1995 to April 1996, with participating APEC members verifying material in April 1996.

The Vocabulary of Teacher Induction

This section clarifies the identifying terms that were used in the survey and the report. The following terms are defined:

- *Teacher Induction Program*—those practices used to help beginning teachers become competent and effective professionals in the classroom;
- *Inductee*—a novice teacher who is being introduced to the teaching profession;
- *Mentor(s) or Guidance Teachers*—individual(s) who play a significant role in offering guidance and assistance to beginning teachers; and
- “*Successful Teacher Induction Program*”—a program that is judged to lead to increased teacher retention or to development of effective skills and positive attitudes.