

## CHAPTER 6

### LESSONS LEARNED, CHALLENGES REMAINING

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In all three APEC members visited during the case studies, and in many of those surveyed, the first year of teaching is viewed as enormously challenging and stressful for new teachers. The first year is also coming to be viewed as critical to the development of a quality teaching force, as it is a time when new teachers learn and hone their skills in practice, and when they are most likely to decide whether or not to remain in the profession.

APEC members that participated in this study are interested in developing and implementing adequate and effective teacher induction programs that address the challenges of the transition into teaching and that attempt to alleviate some of the stress inherent in the first year of teaching. Programs to support new teachers are garnering increasing attention and support from policy makers and educators in APEC members. However, substantial variation exists among APEC members in the features and robustness of their teacher induction programs and, although significant progress is being made, the implemented programs typically lag behind the rhetoric used to describe exemplary programs.

Teacher induction programs reflect a range of delivery systems and strategies. While no delivery system or strategy is necessarily superior to another (especially when examined from the perspective of the individual teacher), adequate planning and implementation of a multi-pronged set of activities have a higher chance of meeting broad policy goals for teacher induction than replicated strategies not tailored to their context. Our objective was to examine the most promising approaches and to share with APEC members lessons learned and challenges remaining.

The information collected by the exploratory survey and case studies is not exhaustive. Our intent was to describe several exemplary practices, and not to describe all program strategies, or to evaluate program coverage and effectiveness among all APEC members. However, the information collected does provide the basis for what has already been achieved and what remains to be done.

## Lessons Learned

One of the main lessons learned from the APEC Teacher Induction Study is that, while APEC members implement a variety of teacher induction strategies through various delivery systems, commitment and context are far more important to “success” than are the particular systems or strategies used. Any teacher induction program is unique in that it is addressing particular needs, responding to a particular culture or tradition, and operating within a particular context. Thus, implementation of a “successful” teacher induction program appears to depend less upon the strict replication of successful strategies than on the program’s ability to understand and respond to its particular context. What the APEC study found was that there are several common conditions that underlie some of the most supportive programs and that appear to be critical to their success. This chapter will discuss typical strategies implemented by APEC members and some of the common characteristics of supportive programs, as well as remaining challenges for future development and refinement of teacher induction programs.

### **Programs use a combination of strategies to acculturate new teachers and to promote their transition.**

The teacher induction programs perceived as successful that we visited use a combination of four strategies to acculturate new teachers and to promote their transition. These strategies are: mentoring; modeling good teacher practice; providing targeted interventions, such as orientation and in-services; and minimizing assessment.

#### **Mentoring**

Mentoring is the most common teacher induction activity found among APEC members. However, as shown in the previous chapter, mentoring goes by many different labels in APEC economies, and it encompasses both formal and informal relationships and formal and informal strategies. In fact, effective mentoring transcends specific strategies. Like effective modeling of practice (discussed in the following section), good mentoring is seamless and flows naturally from the demands of the job and the needs of the new teacher.

Although the best mentoring transcends the specifics of particular teaching skills, the effective programs observed in this study combined obligatory mentoring duties with less formal arrangements that ensured that the new teachers would feel comfortable seeking advice and support from their more experienced peers. Chapters 3, 4, and 5

illustrate that the roles and expectations of tutor teachers in New Zealand, guidance teachers in Japan, and peer and headteachers in the Northern Territory of Australia vary considerably. However, all mentors had specific tasks to perform, as well as a professional and personal responsibility to promote sound formal and informal relationships.

These mentoring programs operate in different cultures, and the contrasts among them can be striking; yet the programs share a common thread. In each case study, we found a teaching culture in which experienced teachers view mentoring as a professional responsibility. They view it as part of their job to pass on practical knowledge and to support the growth of new teachers, as they are expected to support the growth of their students. This professionalism exists regardless of either the respect accorded new teachers or whether new teacher compensation is below or above similarly trained personnel in other occupations.

In contrast to the traditional conception of a mentor found in business, only in isolated cases does one find new teachers selecting their own mentor. Principals and senior teachers typically choose the mentor for the new teacher. In most cases, this process works, in spite of the fact that very few mentors receive training in coaching and counseling. The seriousness that characterizes the selection appears, in most cases, to safeguard against inadequate or poorly delivered mentoring. On the other hand, mentors would like more training, and often feel they are not up to the task required of them.

### **Modeling Good Teaching Practice**

During most of their training, new teachers focus on the theory of teaching, not on its application. In the case studies, regardless of specific location, new teachers generally stated that their practicums did not adequately expose them to the realities that they would face as a teacher in charge of a classroom. It can be concluded, then, that new teachers require more exposure to managing the classroom environment, disciplining disruptive children, working with students both individually and as a group, communicating effectively with parents, and working with their fellow teachers. Effective teacher induction programs support new teachers in these areas by providing time for them both to observe experienced teachers (particularly those teaching similar grades and subject areas) and to have their teaching observed in a non-judgmental, supportive way.

In the most supportive programs that we visited, observation is organic—an integral part of school operations for all teachers—in marked contrast to the staged nature of

many teacher observation techniques used in assessment-oriented programs. Movement between the new teacher's classroom and the experienced teacher's classroom is continual and expected by the new teacher, the experienced teacher, and the students. The observations are not disruptive, because they are commonplace and conducted by other teachers and not by the principal.

Since teachers participate in both solitary and collaborative activities, successful teaching induction programs need to help new teachers learn to find the right balance between these modes. For example, new teachers must learn to contribute to and to learn from group tasks such as curriculum development, syndicate planning (teachers grouped together to form a "school within a school"), and team teaching. These collaborative strategies can reinforce their teaching skills and build confidence for the time when teachers stand alone before their students.

In the best programs, modeling good teaching behavior occurs every day. Many successful programs use aspects of team teaching, such as grouping two teachers and their classes together, to foster the easy flow of communication and physical mobility between a new and an experienced teacher.

### **Targeted Intervention**

Successful teacher induction programs deliver fairly elaborate targeted interventions. These interventions generally take the form of one-week to one-month orientations, activities that promote networking between teachers, and short-term in-service workshops that provide exposure to specific topics. The orientations typically are conducted at both regional and school levels. In the Northern Territory of Australia and in Japan, the orientation is prescribed and comprehensive; in New Zealand, while it tends to vary considerably among schools, it is a discernable activity. All three case study sites also include new teachers in school-wide, in-service activities, and provide them with in-service training of their own choosing. However, much of the targeted intervention is not like these models, and continues to be "just-in-time," responding to already identified problems, rather than addressing potential needs up-front or general professional development. It also is important to note that teacher induction does not supplant other professional training opportunities that offer more options.

### **Assistance not Assessment**

Assessment is not a significant component of the case study teacher induction programs. The absence of serious concern by all participants in the teacher induction program about meeting certification and registration requirements enhances the

provision of assistance and support. Teachers do not feel threatened or even uncomfortable about being observed and asking questions that they fear will reveal professional inadequacies.

However, in some other teacher induction programs, assessment is more formal and is primarily used to “weed out” unqualified teachers. In such cases, assessment is linked so closely to certification or registration that it is sometimes difficult for a program of teacher support to coexist with assessment. Some new teachers have difficulty accepting guidance from and feeling comfortable with a mentor who is also a formal assessor. For instance, this is particularly difficult for new Aboriginal teachers because their culture traditionally separates the role of “help-giver” and “authority.” Teachers in the United States have expressed similar sentiments when the mentor’s judgement seriously affects the new teacher’s future employment.

**While APEC members organize their programs in a variety of ways, individual context is a far more important factor for “success” than which delivery systems or strategies are used.**

APEC members use different program delivery systems to achieve their teacher induction goals. One way to characterize the delivery systems is according to who is primarily responsible for designing the programs. The case studies provide illustrations of member, jurisdictional, and school-level models. As shown in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, in particular, and in Chapter 2, more generally, the choice of a program delivery system tends to be consistent with a member’s approach for the delivery of educational services. Therefore, one model is not seen as inherently better than another model. What the case studies show is the importance of context to adopting a particular approach. Context includes the myriad of political, cultural, economic, and organizational factors that influence the enactment and operation of government programs. Successful adaptation requires making modifications that context requires.

**Member Model.** Under what we will call a “member model,” the member government primarily designs, funds, implements, and monitors the teacher induction program. In some cases, such as in Papua New Guinea, member models are extensions of the inspectorate’s function of ensuring the quality of instructional practices. Therefore, in such an economy, the focus is on assessment. In contrast, Japan has built an assistance-oriented model as an extension of its teacher training. In fact, both Japan and Chinese Taipei are implementing forms of year-long internships for new teachers.

**Jurisdictional Model.** In contrast, in Australia, Canada, and the United States, with federal governments, the member-level ministries do not take an active role in teacher induction. Each state and territory has the authority to develop and implement its own teacher induction program. This delegation can go beyond the provincial level, as well. In the Northern Territory of Australia, for example, delegation to the divisions results in one basic model, with regional variations in focus and implementation. The teacher induction program is designed and implemented at the same level as are policies and procedures regarding recruitment, hiring, and certification.

**School-level Model.** A number of APEC members are now using strategies that require increased decentralization as a fundamental component of their educational reforms. In school-level models, principals, teachers, and other staff are responsible for designing and implementing each new teacher's induction program. We did not observe a pure school-level model in operation, however. Even in New Zealand, where schools play the major role in determining which strategies new teachers are involved in, the teacher induction programs operate within a member-designated framework. On the other hand, in Japan, with a primarily member model, the schools are being required to “customize” their strategies to local circumstances.

### **“Successful” programs have a culture of shared responsibility and support.**

Experienced teachers at the school level were active participants in implementing teacher induction programs, and their strong sense of professional responsibility to support new teachers was widely evident. Experienced teachers—whether active as mentors, more informally as “buddies,” or as ad hoc advisors—shared a common sense of duty to initiate new teachers and to ensure that high professional standards are maintained. Often program strategies impinged on teachers’ personal time, yet, teachers did not seem to begrudge the time they spent supporting new teachers.

Beginning teachers consistently describe the steep learning curve (that results in 60- to 70-hour work weeks) during their first term. Experienced teachers play an extremely important role for new teachers during this period, by modeling good teaching practice and by providing practical advice about how to reduce the time spent preparing lesson plans and instructional resources. Administrators and experienced teachers share a concern that new teachers often have unrealistic expectations for themselves and their students. Experienced teachers can effectively transform the new teacher’s unachievable goals into practices that promote effective teaching. A common refrain

of new teachers was, “I wouldn’t have made it without (fill in the name),” who is another teacher in their school.

### **“Successful” programs encourage the interaction of new and experienced teachers.**

New and experienced teachers move constantly between one another’s classrooms—for visitations, observations, assessments, quick questions, or “keeping an eye on” students. Because both teachers and students are accustomed to this movement, it does not disrupt the class nor confuse the students with respect to authority figures.

Many of the most supportive and innovative programs we studied provide the opportunities for interaction among teachers outside the classroom. For instance, in some schools, teachers engage in group planning in teams, and in others, there are weekly meetings for teachers who teach the same grade level, to discuss various activities as well as the progress of students. Such structures serve as forums for new teachers to contribute meaningfully to the work of their colleagues and the school, and to form additional professional relationships. The meetings often build new teachers’ self-esteem, by giving the newcomers a voice among colleagues, by serving as a learning experience in which new teachers can draw upon the knowledge and resources of others, and by establishing professional and social avenues of support.

The notion of teachers working together is clearly prevalent in “successful” programs, and one of the benefits of such interaction is that relationships between teachers and the guidance provided are quite natural. Thus, the mentoring that occurs is “authentic,” with no sense of forced learning or companionship that is often complained of in other, less developed teacher induction programs.

### **“Successful” programs share a continuum of professional development.**

“Successful” teacher induction programs exemplify the view that teachers are moving along a path of professional development. In each of these cases, all teachers are regarded as professionals, and most importantly, as learners and leaders along different points of a professional continuum. Thus, new teachers are, on the one hand, not expected to do the same job or possess the same skills as veteran teachers. On the other hand, they are still treated like professionals whose contributions are expected to require attention and development.

This philosophy manifests itself in several ways, such as in those previously discussed (i.e., experienced teachers helping new teachers and providing for the interaction of novice and veteran teachers), and in policy. In case study sites, new teachers sometimes are assigned to non-examination level classes or those perceived as less difficult, or they may be provided with release-time (time outside the class and covered by a substitute teacher) to participate in in-service training activities, workshops, or observations of other classrooms.

For example, in Japan, principals have the discretion to reduce new teachers' classroom hours and administrative duties, as well as assign them to classes perceived as less difficult — such as the middle elementary grades, wherein there are fewer child-developmental transitions. Teachers also are provided with at least two periods per week to be observed or to observe other teachers' classes, and at least three periods for consultations with guidance teachers.

### **The most “successful” programs down-played the role of assessment.**

Even though in each of the programs studied assessment is used during a new teacher's tenure, it is never (at least in reality) the primary focus of the induction process. In fact, the role of assessment is significantly downplayed to the point that many teachers are not cognizant of many evaluations, or, in the least, do not worry about meeting the criteria. Many even come to view the reviews as highly supportive.

One aspect of assessment in these sites, that is particularly different from places where assessment is a key feature of induction, is that assessments are informal, frequent, and performed by other teachers. Because new teachers are used to having their teaching observed by other teachers, and subsequently receiving constructive feedback, when the more formal entities (like principals or assessment board designees) observe new teachers for evaluation purposes, new teachers are accustomed to and prepared for the observation. It is rarely the case that even the most formal entities seem threatening. In the Northern Territory, regional officials conduct as few assessments as the regulations allow, and when a beginning teacher fails to develop the skills to meet evaluation criteria, it is looked upon, in part, as a failure of the system to provide the new teacher with the proper aid.

## **The most “successful” programs amass political, financial, and time commitments from relevant authorities.**

**Political and Financial Commitments.** As with most major educational programs, the political commitment of member, jurisdictional, and school-level personnel is critical for the establishment and continued existence of a teacher induction program. The greater the political commitment, the more likely that financial commitment will be forthcoming, and that the political rhetoric supporting new teachers will be translated into real programmatic strategies.

In none of the case-study economies did we observe that the political commitment for teacher induction was especially high. Teacher induction did not garner a great deal of political attention or a great deal of time from educational administrators. In contrast to the dominant issues of educational reform, curriculum restructuring, and education finance, teacher induction received little attention. Yet, the political commitment was high *enough* in these case study sites to result in the commitment of financial resources sufficient to support a range of teacher induction strategies.

Once established, support for teacher induction programs appears to be fairly easy to sustain. Although little empirical evidence exists about the effectiveness of members' teacher induction programs, so far, only a few programs have been eliminated or have faced reduced funding, despite increasing competition for educational resources in many APEC economies. However, the information we received may be biased and may not include cases where reduced political and financial commitment led to a curtailing of teacher induction strategies.

**Time Commitment.** Teacher induction programs can consume anywhere from marginal to substantial amounts of time. For example, several APEC members, such as Japan and Chinese Taipei, are implementing “bridging years” between the end of preservice training and assignment as autonomous classroom teachers. New Zealand provides an amount of time equal to one day a week for teacher induction. These time commitments translate into equivalent financial commitments. In contrast, other programs of a more limited scope consume only several days before the start of the school year, and they require minimal planning time to develop.

These examples illustrate variations of when and how time is used. Often APEC members' desire to provide more time for orientation, mentoring, in-service, and other teacher induction strategies outstrips their capacity to provide those services, because of financial resource constraints.

## **“Successful” programs have clearly articulated goals.**

We identified four primary goals for teacher induction services. These goals are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and some members are pursuing multiple goals. The most frequently discussed use of teacher induction programs is *to provide a support bridge* that eases the passage from being a student of teachers to a teacher of students. In some cases this bridge has a fixed structure, and all new teachers are directed to cross the bridge in an identical way. Programs that rely heavily upon orientation that takes place prior to the start of the school year, for example, typically induct new teachers through group strategies. On the other hand, programs using informal mentoring are more likely to be individualized.

Another common program goal is *to meet individual teacher needs*. Schools in New Zealand are supposed to work with each beginning teacher to design a teacher-specific induction program. The Northern Territory of Australia pursues both the bridging goal and the individual goal with different teacher induction strategies.

Many members have *assessment* as a goal of their teacher induction program. Assessment refers to those strategies, such as planned observations, required of new teachers to satisfy certification or registration requirements. These assessments can be extremely important and can determine a new teacher's likelihood of continuing employment. Considerable controversy exists in the literature and among developers of teacher induction programs and new teachers as to the role assessment should play in a teacher induction program.

Our information suggests that having assessment as a goal has little bearing on whether the teacher induction program is supportive or not. It is how dominant a role assessment plays vis a vis assistance that determines how the program is perceived by new teachers, and the extent to which the program provides support. For example, many teacher induction programs in the United States ostensibly combine assistance and assessment, yet are so closely tied to requirements for teacher certification that new teachers find little support. On the other hand, in programs in the Northern Territory of Australia and New Zealand, assessment and assistance are so closely linked in actual operation, and assessment is sufficiently downplayed by mentors and administrators, that the distinction that exists in program descriptions is illusory. These teachers have even come to view the assessments as highly supportive.

The ability to provide a distinction between assessment and assistance in the mind of some beginning teachers also is extremely important and may be influenced by

cultural factors. As discussed in Chapter 3, Aborigines, for example, do not respond in the same way as non-Aboriginal new teachers in the Northern Territory, when peer teachers advise as well as evaluate their performances.

Finally, many teacher induction programs seek *to acculturate beginning teachers* to the norms and values of teaching, to school culture, and to school policies. Most new teachers, after one year, believe that current student-teacher practicums provide a synthetic experience that will not translate into “real-life” situations. Student-teachers often have limited classroom-management exposure (since the classroom environment was created by and is maintained by the regular classroom teacher), no interaction with parents, and fewer required preparations than they face as new teachers. When they become teachers, they must deal with each of these situations, as well as learn school policies and procedures, work with subject and curriculum-development staff, and balance overwhelming professional demands with personal survival. In interviews, teachers often told stories of how, at the beginning of the school year, their ignorance of other cultures and of differences in the way their assigned school operated compared with the one where they did their practicum, resulted in embarrassment, confusion, and sometimes conflict. Several of the induction programs we examined sought to overcome these hazards by providing new teachers with orientation to their particular school environment, or by assigning mentors to “show them the ropes.”

## **Remaining Challenges**

Existing teacher induction programs, even those perceived as highly effective and successful, do not meet the expectations of APEC policy makers and educators. Our respondents indicate that they want better teacher induction programs and want to ensure that these improved programs are available to all new teachers. At the same time, however, there are threats, in some APEC members, to the continued existence of current programs.

## **Missing Program Elements**

Administrators, both at teacher-training institutions and in the schools and jurisdictions, say they want closer links between the faculty and new teachers. However, *the links between preservice training and new teachers are tenuous*. Faculty at teacher-training institutions rarely have contact with graduates. While many teacher-training institutions discuss revisions to their curriculum to make them more school-based and relevant to new teachers, few changes in faculty behavior get

reported. Faculty have little incentive to maintain contact with graduates, as their performance is rated on teaching, publishing, and working on faculty committees, not on follow-up.

In Chinese Taipei, through its internship, the linkage between preservice and new teachers is designed to be strong (at least for one year). However, the capacity to forge greater linkages to preservice training institutions may be difficult for many APEC members, because of budgetary constraints. In both Australia and New Zealand, for example, working with new graduates is not likely to be a very high priority, when the perceived greater challenge is responding to new curricula and other educational reforms.

*Another missing program element is formative and summative evaluations.* Only rarely are teacher induction programs systematically evaluated. New teachers usually are asked only to complete a survey evaluating a workshop or orientation presentation. As discussed in Chapter 4, Japan's Ministry regularly evaluates its programs. Another partial exception is the study by Renwick and Vise in New Zealand, which tracks a cohort of students of teaching from beginning preservice education through their first year on the job. This study provides insightful information on the growth, problems, and transitions that teachers experience. As a result, it gives program developers useful information for determining what strategies are likely to be useful. However, Renwick and Vise did not attempt to determine the effectiveness of New Zealand's teacher induction program.

Conducting summative evaluations is particularly difficult, as many teacher induction programs lack well-articulated goals and standards. Obviously, teacher induction strategies are only one piece of a larger picture that leads to improved retention, higher quality teachers, and smoother acculturation; and aspects of training, recruitment, assignments, assessment, and educational reform are intervening factors affecting any evaluation of teacher induction programs. Regardless of these and other complicating factors, more systematic evaluations could promote better program development and implementation. Continued reliance on anecdotal evidence could prove dangerous in times of increased difficulties in maintaining political and financial commitment.

## **Improved Student Teaching Practice**

Teacher induction programs should build upon preservice training. Conversely, preservice training should be informed by the needs of beginning teachers. Today, in all too many places, new teachers receive little practical experience during preservice training. In addition to increasing linkages between faculty and new graduates, opportunities exist to improve student practicums. New teachers in this case study consistently commented on the need for more realistic practicums. They believe, rightly or wrongly, that their transition would be smoother if they had to deal with more realistic classroom-management problems and with parents, before they were assigned full responsibility for a classroom of students. The Japanese transition year and the Chinese Taipei internship represent models for increased practical training. They are expensive to implement, but may be highly cost effective, in the long run, if they result in higher morale, increased teacher retention, and better teaching. Designing effective lower-cost alternatives will be challenging.

## **Budgetary and Political Pressures**

It is clear from responses to the exploratory survey and case studies that the future for teacher induction programs is increasingly unsettled. Although infrequent, several APEC members noted the termination of programs or strategies, due to budgetary constraints. Other programs are being reduced or are trying out less expensive strategies, as an alternative to strategies that can no longer be afforded.

During times of mounting fiscal pressure, the importance of having a strong program advocate increases. The level of political commitment required to sustain a program is not constant; it shifts as economic pressures and political agendas shift. Will teacher induction programs that have survived changes in personnel over the years (such as those in the Northern Territory of Australia and New Zealand) continue to thrive when there is pressure to increase teacher salaries and reduce expenditures? Only time will tell.

## **Equity**

In most APEC members, not all new teachers partake of all teacher induction program activities. Often, wealthier jurisdictions and schools are able to provide more teacher induction strategies than poorer communities. Thus, teachers in urban or rural schools may be more or less likely to participate.

The quality of the programs also varies. Wealthy schools or jurisdictions can supplement national and jurisdictional resources, not only to reach more teachers, but to provide more in-service training, longer orientation, specialized content-area support, and other strategies. From our interviews, mentors also are more likely to receive time off to work with beginning teachers in schools with greater resources.

Some commentators fear that over time, two classes of teachers could emerge: one more highly qualified, through selection and recruitment, as well as induction, and another less qualified. Equity in the provision and distribution of quality teachers is critical to the success of educational reform.

## **Other Challenges**

In developing and maintaining an effective teacher induction program, one also must confront issues permeating the teaching profession in some APEC economies. Teaching is often a low-status, high-stress, low-pay, predominantly female occupation. Turnover is high, particularly in certain rural and urban areas, and in developing economies where females increasingly have more job opportunities. Many new teachers are drawn from classes and cultures different from the students they are asked to teach. Changes are occurring even in economies where these problems are less apparent, such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Chinese Taipei, where teachers traditionally have enjoyed good pay and high status.

Several APEC members are beginning to introduce annual performance evaluation for public employees, including teachers. Drawing upon business models for continual improvement, these evaluations replace a system that most new teachers anticipated when they chose their field, (i.e., a system in which they received permanent certification and automatic, seniority-based raises). Teachers are, therefore, apprehensive of these newly implemented personnel systems. They fear that the evaluation process will require them to constantly prove themselves, but will not emphasize improvement.

## **A Time of Change**

As a result of these lessons learned, and as a result of the remaining challenges observed, we conclude that a teacher induction program cannot be static. It is a product of its environment, and it is a force affecting that environment. An effective program can help alleviate stress and make new teachers feel good about their accomplishments; and it also can help to produce better teachers.

With many APEC members experiencing large increases in the number of new teachers (caused by enrollment growth, retirements, and turnover), it will be extremely difficult to achieve the goals of many education reforms without providing better teacher induction programs. Such reform goals as achieving higher standards, introducing new curricula, and transforming teachers from imparters of knowledge into coaches and motivators depend upon the capacity and the willingness of teachers to change. A teacher induction program can serve not only to acculturate the new teacher to new goals for education, but as a model for the professional development of all teachers.