



HELPING HANDS FOR NEW TEACHERS

INDUCTION PROGRAM BUILDS A BRIDGE BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND CLASSROOM

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For quite some time, many of us involved in teacher preparation at institutions of higher education have felt uncomfortable with preparing and supporting our preservice teachers through graduation, wishing them luck in their first years of teaching, and offering no official post-graduation support, short of the opportunity to return for a graduate degree.

This discomfort is particularly prevalent for those of us who believe that partnerships between institutions of higher education and teachers, schools, and districts have the power to transform education.

At the University of South

Carolina, we addressed this lack of engagement by creating the Carolina Teacher Induction Program (CarolinaTIP). Building on the strength of university-school partnerships and engaging in teacher-centered support, we demonstrate a commitment to our graduates beyond the degree by creating an innovative and added layer of support for induction teachers.

Our hope is that, by filling this key gap in the continuum of teacher support, our College of Education can play a role in not only recruiting and preparing the next generation of teachers but also in retaining them as successful professionals throughout their careers.

Here, we discuss universities' responsibilities to teacher graduates and our approach to partnering with districts to tackle those responsibilities through university-based teacher induction support. Finally, we share what we have learned about supporting early career teachers in addition to some of the results emerging from our approach.

HOW WE BEGAN

In 2015, South Carolina adopted the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, which articulates a shared vision of the knowledge, skills, and characteristics needed for students to be successful in college, career, and citizenship (South Carolina

The Carolina Teacher Induction Program supports the continued growth of teachers through their first three years in the classroom.

Department of Education, 2015).

The role of high-quality teachers is central to meeting this vision for the future. In our state and across the country, however, efforts to provide students with a high-quality education are undermined by our collective failure to recruit and retain teachers.

To ensure all students have access to highly effective teachers, we must find a way to stop the revolving door of teachers into and out of the classroom. We believe this requires an innovative approach to supporting novice teachers — an approach that intentionally and directly serves teachers' needs as they learn how to best meet their students' needs.

Thus far, the absence of institutions of higher education in supporting new teachers has been a glaring gap along the continuum of teacher support. Just as institutions of higher education depend on schools and veteran teachers to help prepare novice teachers for the classroom, schools should be able to count on these institutions to share responsibility for new teacher induction and support.

The Carolina Teacher Induction Program serves as a bridge between the university and the classroom, providing support of clinical application to novice teachers to positively impact teacher retention. The program is built on the university's and districts' shared goal of developing a college- and career-ready workforce.

The shared ownership of this goal, and of the support required to achieve

it, has implications for not only the development of preservice teachers, but also the continued growth of teachers through their first three years in the classroom.

Acting on the vision of the Holmes Group (Johnson, 1990) to transform educator preparation and professional development for practicing teachers, the university created the Professional Development Schools Network, and from that we have a rich history of partnerships with districts, schools, and teachers.

The network's mission is to establish and maintain spaces for research and innovation where university and public school partners collaboratively investigate student learning, professional development, clinical preparation, and induction to institutionalize best practices across teacher learning contexts. CarolinaTIP started within this deeply collaborative environment.

In its second year, the program expanded beyond the network and began creating partnerships with new schools. Now in its fourth year, CarolinaTIP has grown from serving 15 teachers in nine professional development schools to serving 131 teachers in 69 schools across six school districts in South Carolina.

Expanding beyond the network has allowed CarolinaTIP to strengthen its program development, have a wider impact on teacher efficacy and retention, and foster collaboration among our partner schools and districts.

HOLISTIC SUPPORT

To support new teachers, South Carolina created statewide induction and mentoring guidelines for districts (South Carolina Department of Education, 2017). According to these guidelines, induction support should include a district-assigned mentor for each novice teacher, mandatory teacher orientation to the district, and a yearlong induction program held within the hiring district.

With these relatively loose guidelines and inconsistent funding, induction support varies widely from one district to another, and there are limits to the support schools and districts can provide.

Districts and schools have an overflowing plate of responsibilities when it comes to onboarding new teachers. District staff must orient teachers to the protocols and structures of the district, educating them about everything from employee handbooks to organizational charts to teacher evaluation procedures. They must also provide professional learning on district frameworks, initiatives, curriculum expectations, assessments, and resources.

School-based mentors and other school staff face a similarly wide range of responsibilities as they introduce new teachers to the protocols, support staff, expectations, procedures, and resources within the school. In most districts, this does not leave much in the way of time or resources available for more comprehensive or responsive new

teacher support, such as personalized support in learning to balance the demands of the job and navigate the transition from student to professional.

With collaborative insight from partner districts, we identified a void in new teacher support, specifically support aimed at meeting novice teachers’ individual needs, that is not encompassed by existing curriculum, instruction, and procedural support.

As a result, we determined CarolinaTIP should approach support from a holistic and responsive stance with the goal of growing the overall capacity of new teachers. With schools and districts providing the necessary site-specific aspects, the program is meant to supplement, not supplant, local teacher support.

The ultimate goal of this symbiotic relationship is to collectively help novice teachers develop the tools and strategies required to meet their students’ needs and the self-efficacy and emotional resiliency needed to persevere and thrive in the profession.

To accomplish this, CarolinaTIP provides three years of scaffolded support. While some program aspects, such as emotional support steeped in empathy, are pervasive across all three years and all support remains responsive to the developmental readiness of the teacher, each year of the program maintains a progressive focus.

The first year uses a responsive coaching method and concentrates on helping teachers navigate and create a solid professional foundation, specifically focusing on working with other adults, reaching and teaching all students, and strengthening efficacy in classroom management.

The second year is designed to develop reflective practitioners and help teachers identify, explore, analyze, and grow their individual teacher identity using a goal-based coaching approach.

The third year employs developmental coaching, a more facilitative form of goals-based coaching, to help teachers identify and develop their personal leadership skills,

TEACHER EFFICACY AVERAGE OVERALL TEACHER EFFICACY RATINGS	
1 = NOTHING 3 = VERY LITTLE 5 = SOME INFLUENCE 7 = QUITE A BIT 9 = A GREAT DEAL	
2017 Cohort 3rd year of teaching (n=12)	
Time	Overall efficacy rating
Fall 2017	5.79
Spring 2018	6.78
Fall 2018	6.63
Spring 2019	6.73
Fall 2019	7.01
This table shows changes in the inaugural cohort’s overall efficacy over time from their first year in the classroom (fall 2017) to the third year in the classroom (fall 2019). Teachers used a 9-point scale developed by Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2001) to rate their level of confidence in effectively carrying out specific teaching duties in three domains: classroom management, student engagement, and instructional strategies. Over the five time points measured, third-year teachers’ efficacy increased 1.22 on a 9-point scale. Due to the small sample size of this cohort, evaluators didn’t examine statistical significance but will do so for larger cohorts in the future.	

both in and out of the classroom.

All participants receive responsive in-class and personal support from an assigned coach and further targeted support in group sessions. Participants can also take two CarolinaTIP graduate courses at the university, with tuition paid by the program. The courses are offered during the summer and created to help teachers progress from their first to second year and then their second to third year in the classroom.

RESEARCH-DRIVEN DESIGN

Our efforts to support novice teachers through CarolinaTIP have

TEACHER EFFICACY AVERAGE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT RATINGS	
1 = NOTHING 3 = VERY LITTLE 5 = SOME INFLUENCE 7 = QUITE A BIT 9 = A GREAT DEAL	
2017 Cohort 3rd year of teaching (n=12)	
Time	Efficacy for classroom management rating
Fall 2017	5.62
Spring 2018	6.59
Fall 2018	6.63
Spring 2019	6.71
Fall 2019	7.40
This table shows changes in the inaugural cohort’s classroom management efficacy over time from the first year in the classroom (fall 2017) to the third year in the classroom (fall 2019). Teachers used a 9-point scale developed by Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2001) to rate their level of confidence in effectively carrying out classroom management tasks (e.g. responding to defiant students, establishing a classroom management system with each group of students). Over the five time points measured, third-year teachers’ classroom management efficacy increased 1.78 on a 9-point scale. Due to the small sample size of this cohort, evaluators didn’t examine statistical significance but will do so with larger cohorts in the future.	

been guided, in part, by the literature on teacher retention and attrition. Research has found several indicators a novice teacher is likely to leave the profession, including struggles with classroom management, difficulties managing the stress and resulting burnout that often come with teaching, navigating the demands of the job, and a general lack of self-efficacy (Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Strong, evidence-based induction and mentoring programs have shown

AVERAGE SOURCES OF JOB STRESS RATINGS
(LOWER RATING IS POSITIVE)

- 1 = NO STRESS
- 2 = VERY LITTLE STRESS
- 3 = MILD STRESS
- 4 = MODERATE STRESS
- 5 = HIGH STRESS
- 6 = EXTREME STRESS

2017 Cohort
3rd year of teaching (n=12)

Time	Job stress rating
Fall 2017	3.75
Spring 2018	3.46
Fall 2018	3.58
Spring 2019	3.71
Fall 2019	3.47

This table shows changes in the inaugural cohort’s job stress over time from the first year in the classroom (fall 2017) to the fall of the third year in the classroom (fall 2019). Teachers used a 6-point scale from No Stress (1) to Extreme Stress (6) adapted from Klassen & Chiu (2010) to rate their levels of stress related to areas such as accountability for student achievement, confidence in content knowledge, and ability to implement planned instruction. Over the five time points measured, third-year teachers’ job stress decreased 0.28 on a 6-point scale. Due to the small sample size of this cohort, evaluators didn’t examine statistical significance but will do so with larger cohorts in the future.

significant potential in improving teacher retention and overall performance (Bastian & Marks, 2017; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

The evidence base also suggests that one of the most important factors for supporting new teachers is individualized support, so we intentionally built CarolinaTIP around responsive, personalized, and individualized support to help teachers

improve their self-efficacy for classroom management, student engagement, and classroom instruction while providing them with strategies for managing stress through emotional support, a strong sense of teacher identity, and a community of fellow educators.

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

From the start, ongoing, formative evaluation has been essential to the development of CarolinaTIP. Our evaluation team works hand in hand with our development team (and is, in fact, represented on our writing team here) to provide ongoing feedback about the inner workings of the program.

In addition, the evaluation demonstrates that the program is yielding encouraging outcomes, including improvements in teacher efficacy (Tshannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), particularly in the classroom management domain that has been a major focus of the program. We have also seen consistent decreases in job-related stress (Klassen & Chiu, 2010) as teachers progress through the program.

Teachers have overwhelmingly reported that the program has contributed to their desire to stay in the profession. Data collected through annual teacher focus groups provide further evidence of CarolinaTIP’s positive effect on teachers’ self-efficacy in the classroom and on their ability to respond to job-related stress, which are both strong precursors to retention.

Thus far, 98% of teachers participating in CarolinaTIP have remained in the profession. While we do not expect this extraordinary trend to continue indefinitely, we do believe these results are early indicators that the program is having the desired effect on new teachers and teacher retention.

Through teacher focus groups, we have learned that there are two things about CarolinaTIP that participants value most: the positive, personal relationships they form with other teachers and coaches and the

completely nonevaluative nature of the program, made possible by the fact that the program is external to their employer. Teachers value having an external, safe space to be vulnerable, explore their individual teacher identity, share experiences, and grow together as professionals.

Because of this, maintaining the quality of relationships has been a central focus as the program expands. One path for maintaining those relationships has been hiring retired teachers to serve as part-time coaches. This allows new teachers to benefit from outstanding veteran teachers without draining the energy and time of teachers working in the system. Promisingly, as the program has expanded from one coach in the first year to 12 coaches, teachers have continued to report strong, nurturing relationships.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

The positive results of CarolinaTIP reinforce our belief in the need for universities and school districts to share responsibility for ongoing teacher support and retention. Although we recognize that our program offers unique elements that boost teacher self-efficacy and reduce stress, we also recognize the important support new teachers receive from the schools and districts in which they work.

A combination of university- and district-based induction programs, in conjunction with quality preservice preparation, is vital to the long-term success and learning of new teachers. Through the power of partnerships, it is possible to transform the landscape of new teacher learning and support and strengthen the teacher pipeline.

As we collectively and positively impact teaching and learning, one teacher at a time, the beneficiaries will be the students we ultimately serve.

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