

Mentoring and Induction Toolkit

Planning a Scope and Sequence for Beginning Teacher Professional Learning

JANUARY 2019

Workbook



Planning a Scope and Sequence for Beginning Teacher Professional Learning

Purpose: This resource is part of the *Mentoring and Induction Toolkit* from the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders. This tool helps school or district teams plan for comprehensive systems of beginning teacher support that emphasize standards-based instructional practices.

Part 1—Review Instructional Frameworks and Standards

High-impact professional learning activities for beginning teachers reinforce effective instructional practices that are grounded in rigorous standards for teaching and learning. This activity is designed to help school or district teams identify and prioritize the instructional practices that should be continually reinforced through all beginning teacher support activities. To complete this activity, teams will review guidance documents that define practices for effective teaching and learning. The guidance documents may include information on the following:

- **Professional teaching standards:** These standards define the knowledge and skills that teachers must have to provide equitable learning opportunities to all students. Some states and districts operationalize their teaching standards through rubrics that define what the standards and indicators look like across levels of practice (for example, developing, applying, innovating, etc.).
- **Instructional frameworks:** Some states or districts outline a framework for instruction within their professional teaching standards. Others use frameworks for teaching and learning such as the Danielson or Marzano frameworks.
- **Other documentation of instructional priorities:** Some districts or schools may have adopted sets of specific instructional practices based on local priorities. TeachingWorks' [High-Leverage Practices](#) is an example of a set of instructional practices that many districts and schools have adopted.

Materials and Set-Up

- One copy per team member of the applicable school or district guidance documents described above
- Sticky notes in two different colors

Procedure

Step 1: Each team member will read through the applicable school or district guidance documents that define practices for effective teaching and learning. Team members are encouraged to take notes on and highlight the knowledge, skills, and practices defined in the documents that are particularly important for beginning teachers.

Step 2: Each team member will brainstorm a list of **no more than six** teaching practices that they believe are most important for beginning teachers to develop, practice, and refine during their first or second years of teaching. (Note: The team may increase or decrease this number, depending on the size of the group.)

Step 3: Team members will use the sticky notes to record their six most essential practices for beginning teachers. Team members will write one practice per sticky note. Practices that are related to **instruction** should be recorded on one designated color of sticky note, and **all other practices** (e.g., classroom management practices) should be recorded on sticky notes of a different color. There are no restrictions on the number of instruction versus noninstruction practices a team member may record, but all team members are limited to six practices each (six sticky notes) in total. If applicable, record the number of the standard or indicator from the original school or district guidance document.

Tip: Use the following sentence starter: “Beginning teachers must be able to”

Example: Beginning teachers must be able to give specific, actionable feedback to students, using a variety of methods (Standard 3.2).

Step 4: Select a volunteer to kick off the categorization process. This volunteer will choose *one* of his or her sticky notes and read it aloud to the team. Any team member who has a sticky note describing a similar practice will give his or her sticky note to that volunteer. (For example, several team members may have sticky notes expressing similar ideas about beginning teachers demonstrating competency in giving high-quality feedback.) The volunteer will count the total number of sticky notes for that practice.

Step 5: A designated recorder will capture the information using the following chart. (Add rows as needed.)

Beginning teacher practices	Framework reference number (as applicable)	Number of votes

Step 6: A second volunteer will choose one of his or her sticky notes to read aloud to the team. The team will repeat the process of consolidating sticky notes that describe similar practices, counting the total number of votes and recording the information on the chart.

Step 7: Taking turns, the team will repeat the process until all sticky notes have been shared and recorded. It is likely that there will be sticky notes with only one vote.

Step 8: As a team, reflect on the following questions:

- Which beginning teacher practices received the most votes?

- Is there a balance of instructional practices and noninstructional practices?
- Now that you have completed the exercise, would your team make any changes to the way the sticky notes were grouped to classify the practices? For example, are there any instances where groups should be split to help capture discrete but related beginning teacher needs? Are there instances where groups can be consolidated?
- Are there other data sources that can help triangulate beginning teacher professional learning needs—for example, observation feedback from mentors or supervising teachers, beginning teacher needs assessments, information from university partners, and so forth? What additional information about beginning teacher needs can we learn from the data?
- Are there beginning teacher professional learning needs related to specific **content or subject areas** that are not captured on this list? For example, beginning elementary reading teachers may need professional development to implement a specific reading curriculum or intervention program.
- Are there beginning teacher professional learning needs related to serving the needs of **diverse learners**—including students with disabilities and English learners—that are not captured on this list?

Step 9: As a team, use the information from the reflection questions to brainstorm a list of the five most important practices for beginning teachers. These are the five practices that the team agrees should be integrated and reinforced through all beginning teacher professional learning activities.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Part 2—Plan Through-Lines in Beginning Teacher Professional Learning Activities

The purpose of this section is to help school or district leaders integrate the high-priority beginning teacher practices identified in Part 1 throughout beginning teacher professional learning activities.

Step 1: Fill out the first column of the chart on the next page with the five beginning teacher practices identified in Part 1, Step 9.

Step 2: Working with your team, complete the chart to demonstrate the way the practices will be integrated across four essential structures for beginning teacher professional development: onboarding, beginning teacher professional learning communities, ongoing professional learning opportunities, and mentor guidance.

Guiding question	Onboarding	Beginning teacher professional learning communities	Ongoing professional development opportunities	Mentor guidance
How will this professional learning activity reinforce [Practice 1 text here]?				
How will this professional learning activity reinforce [Practice 2 text here]?				
How will this professional learning activity reinforce [Practice 3 text here]?				
How will this professional learning activity reinforce [Practice 4 text here]?				
How will this professional learning activity reinforce [Practice 5 text here]?				

Part 3—Create a Scope and Sequence for Beginning Teacher Professional Learning Activities

The purpose of this section is to help school or district leaders think critically about leveraging various support structures for beginning teachers to ensure that their professional learning needs are met.

Logistics

Use the chart below to record answers to the following questions about beginning teacher support structure logistics. Answering these questions will help the team plan for a realistic scope and sequence of professional learning content for beginning teachers.

Onboarding program	
When will initial new teacher onboarding occur?	
How many hours/days are available for initial onboarding activities?	
Are there onboarding follow-up activities throughout the school year?	
Beginning teacher professional learning communities	
How often will beginning teachers meet in professional learning communities (PLCs)?	
Will PLCs occur in person or virtually?	
Are there any established mechanisms for follow-up between PLC meetings?	
Ongoing professional development opportunities	
What are the available opportunities for beginning teachers to engage in structured professional development experiences outside of onboarding, PLCs, or mentoring (e.g., designated professional development, in-service days, weekly department meetings)?	
How often will beginning teachers engage in these professional development opportunities?	
Mentor guidance	
How often are mentors expected to observe beginning teachers during classroom instruction?	
How often will beginning teachers meet with their mentors for activities like observation debriefing, analysis of student data, and so forth?	

Professional Learning Content

Using the chart below, brainstorm essential professional learning topics and content to be covered within each of the four beginning teacher support structures listed in the chart.

Step 1: Based on the chart the team completed in Part 2, record professional learning topics and content related to the five most important teaching practices identified by your team in the chart below. The goal is to reinforce high-priority teaching practices by spiraling content through several different professional learning structures, while creating coherence across the entire system of professional learning support for beginning teachers.

Step 2: Use the remaining professional learning topics and content recorded in the chart for the sticky note exercise (Part 1, Step 5) to determine and record other essential topics and content.

Considerations

- Consider how different professional learning methods lend themselves to different types of content. For example, monthly professional development sessions could focus on a different topic every month, or the sessions could function as a series to build deep knowledge and skill in a particular area of teaching practice.
- Think creatively about how mentors can provide guidance to reinforce content learned during onboarding, ongoing professional development, and professional learning communities. In addition to regular classroom observations and feedback, mentors can reinforce new skills through coteaching, coplanning, or co-observation with their beginning teachers.
- Be realistic about time and logistical constraints. Refer to the logistics chart on the previous page to ensure that the team isn't over- or underplanning for a particular activity. It may help to plan topics by week or month.
- Think about the sequencing of the content. What content must be conveyed to beginning teachers at the start of the school year? What content can wait until later in the year?

Onboarding program	Beginning teacher professional learning communities
Essential professional learning topics and content to be covered:	Essential professional learning topics and content to be covered:

Ongoing professional development opportunities	Mentor guidance
Essential professional learning topics and content to be covered:	Essential professional learning topics and content to be covered:

Instructionally-Focused Formative Assessment

Using the chart below, reflect on how the five principles of instructionally-focused formative assessment will be integrated into a comprehensive system of support for beginning teachers.

Principles of instructionally focused formative assessment	How will beginning teachers support structures reinforce this principle?
1. Standards-based tools and processes	
2. Reflection on instructional practices	
3. Examination of evidence of student learning	
4. Observation and feedback	
5. Alignment with formal evaluations	

Next Steps

As a team, complete the chart below to document next steps for planning beginning teacher professional learning activities.

Onboarding program	
Who will lead planning efforts?	
Who will support planning efforts?	
What are the key next steps?	
Beginning teacher professional learning communities	
Who will lead planning efforts?	
Who will support planning efforts?	
What are the key next steps?	
Ongoing professional development opportunities	
Who will lead planning efforts?	
Who will support planning efforts?	
What are the key next steps?	
Mentor guidance	
Who will lead planning efforts?	
Who will support planning efforts?	
What are the key next steps?	

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This work was originally produced in whole or in part by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders with funds from the U.S. Department of Education under cooperative agreement number S283B120021. The content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Education, nor does mention or visual representation of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the federal government.

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