

# THE BIG PICTURE: COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS OF TEACHER INDUCTION

**In current literature**, school districts, and educational agencies nationwide, there is no definition of a *program of teacher induction*. In many places, it refers to an *orientation* for beginning teachers or teachers new to a district prior to the start of the school year. Some districts consider it one-on-one mentoring where veteran classroom teachers support new teachers. Most often, the mentor is a site-based teacher appointed by the principal to provide resources, emotional support, and guidance. Other districts use an array of professional development—required, or voluntary—to fill in perceived pre-service gaps or ensure that new teachers are *up to speed* on district curriculum and instructional initiatives.

Recent efforts to revise teacher *evaluation* systems nationwide have led many districts to conceptualize teacher induction as a program that carefully assesses a teacher’s progress towards effectiveness via more frequent classroom observations by administrators and occasionally peer evaluators. In a few states, California most notably, teacher induction programs are required for *licensure*.

NTC sees all these elements as important to the success of a new teacher. Yet programs that rely on just one or two of the components cannot ensure significant impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning. In fact, University of Pennsylvania Professor Richard Ingersoll’s recent national study finds that no one component impacts new teachers’ decisions to remain in teaching or their perceived success.

Informed by over two decades of work with hundreds of school districts and state agencies and committed to increasing student learning by accelerating new teachers effectiveness, NTC has found that a comprehensive and systemic approach to teacher induction is essential. This is illustrated by the graphic to the right: NTC’s Program Theory of Action. It includes the vision, provides a road map and guides and helps to assess a program’s progress.

The *Program Theory of Action (ToA)* suggests three programmatic considerations: 1) impact; 2) program design; 3) conditions for success. These help to guide NTC and school districts and state agencies while conveying a vision of induction as a comprehensive program within a larger system of human capital development.

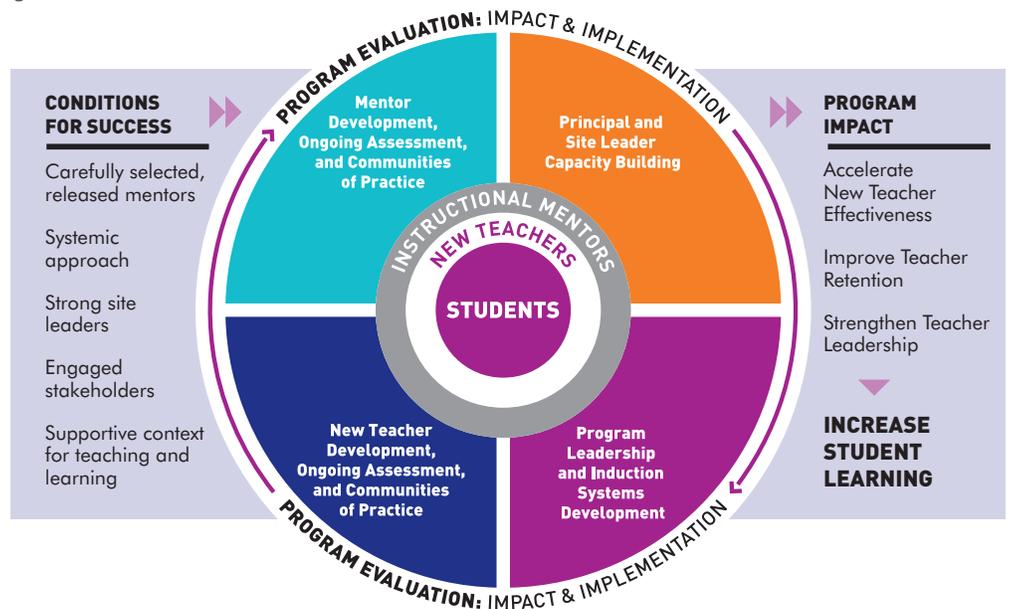
## IMPACT

The ultimate beneficiary of a comprehensive induction program is the student. A growing body of research shows that students taught by teachers who receive comprehensive induction support for at least two years demonstrate significantly higher learning gains.

The impact on student learning is predicated upon areas where the induction program can have direct impact:

1. Teacher effectiveness
2. Teacher retention
3. Teacher leadership

Focused, comprehensive induction helps teachers get better faster, sometimes surpassing veteran colleagues. Successful teachers are more likely to stay in the profession; numerous programs point to dramatic increases in teacher retention, even in hard-to-staff schools. Strong programs not only advance the careers of experienced teachers who serve as instructional mentors, but also foster new teacher leadership.



## PROGRAM DESIGN

The millions of students taught each year by beginning teachers are in the center since their success is at the heart of the program. Encircling those students are the beginning teachers who are encircled by instructional mentors. All are nested within the comprehensive program.

The components essential for program success are:

- Capable Instructional Mentors
- Effective Principals
- Multiple Support Structures for Beginning Teachers
- Strong Program Leaders
- Ongoing Program Evaluation

### Capable Instructional Mentors

**Mentoring new teachers** is complex and demanding work and requires a specific set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. To become effective teachers of teachers, teachers need focused preparation, ongoing professional development, a community of practice focused on the complexities of accelerating new teachers' practice, and opportunities to engage in formative assessment to advance their own effectiveness.

### Effective Principals

**The principal's influence** on a beginning teacher cannot be overestimated. Thus, comprehensive induction efforts also focus on building the capacity of principals and other site leaders to create environments where new teachers thrive. Supporting principals in utilizing standards-based supervision and evaluation practices and providing meaningful feedback strengthen the entire system of human capital development.

### Multiple Support Structures for Beginning Teachers

**New teachers also** need specialized support beyond the principal and instructional mentor. Comprehensive programs include systematic protocols that help mentors and beginning teachers collect and analyze data of practice and student learning, use those data to make formative assessments, and identify and make adjustments to help students learn more. Other important structures include a community of practice for beginning teachers facilitated by instructional mentors and guided by professional teaching standards, rigorous student content standards, differentiated instruction, social and emotional learning, innovative technology, and other instructional priorities.

### Strong Program Leaders

**An effective program** leader understands the potential of comprehensive teacher induction to leverage change. Strong programs require leaders with vision that reaches beyond the initial years of a teacher's practice.

## Program Evaluation

**Program evaluation is** critical for continuous improvement. It involves the regular collection of data of implementation and impact to improve the program. Stakeholder surveys; artifacts of program implementation; quantitative data of teacher satisfaction, effectiveness, retention; focus groups and interviews can collect data to improve programs.

## CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

**There are five** conditions essential for program success. A comprehensive approach cannot stand alone, but is embedded in the larger system of teacher development. The quality of the mentors must demonstrate professionalism, vanguard thinking, excellence in practice, and a positive impact on student learning. Principals are instructional leaders who recognize and value this investment. All stakeholders must value teacher induction and support its implementation. And the conditions at school sites must build the efficacy of new teachers.

**In 2011, NTC** published *Induction Program Standards (IPS)*, which serve as a framework for program design, implementation, and evaluation. These standards are grouped under three essential program components:

1. The foundational program standards provide the platform upon which an induction program is built. They underscore the need for strong leadership, a shared vision, realistic allocation of resources and principal engagement.
2. The structural standards encompass instructional mentors; mentor preparation, development, and ongoing support, formative assessment for new teachers; and targeted professional learning for new teachers. These standards focus on services and supports for both mentors and beginning teachers.
3. The instructional standards focus on classroom practice and student learning. They articulate the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions that teachers must develop.

**By providing a** common language to the essential components of a comprehensive teacher induction programs, these Induction Program Standards guide program development and assessment of effectiveness.

**While the differences** found in educational settings can make it challenging to reach a single definition for teacher induction, NTC's experiences supporting districts have helped define the necessary ingredients for programs to successfully support the growth of new teachers and the students they teach.



**TO DISCUSS A PARTNERSHIP** WITH NTC TO TAKE YOUR INDUCTION PROGRAM TO THE NEXT LEVEL, CONTACT US AT 831.600.2200 OR [INFO@NEWTEACHERCENTER.ORG](mailto:INFO@NEWTEACHERCENTER.ORG)