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Teacher Academy Induction Learning Community: Guiding Teachers Through Their Zone of Proximal Development

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Teacher Academy Induction Learning Community: Guiding Teachers Through Their Zone of Proximal Development

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This is a preliminary analysis of The Academy for Teacher Excellence (ATE) induction support provided through the Teacher Academy Induction Learning Community (TAILC). In response to current US teacher attrition rates, ATE–TAILC's primary objective is to retain teachers in the classroom and provide support to ensure they are fully prepared to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. In this manuscript, we will share the TAILC component as a support structure for teacher candidates/interns during the apprenticeship period, which commences while obtaining certification requirements and continues during/through their first years of teaching. Data were collected vis à vis surveys, individual and group interviews, and induction mentors' classroom observations. Qualitative methods were used to analyze the data. We describe and discuss effective services and professional development activities provided to 69 novice teachers. We concluded that effective teacher induction support assists novice teachers through their zone of proximal development in becoming members of a community of practice.

Keywords: teacher induction, mentoring and coaching, communities of practice, teacher efficacy, cultural efficaciousness

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Darling-Hammond (2000) asked, how can educators ensure a competent, caring, and qualified teacher for every child? At the Academy for Teacher Excellence, University of Texas at San Antonio, we ask – how can teacher education programs support and guide novice teachers to become competent and qualified, particularly when working in high-need areas such as bilingual, mathematics, science, and special education? Additionally, we must consider that campus characteristics such as grade level assignment, school culture, and leadership often influence novices' teaching efficacy (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). As Feiman-Nemser noted, "Even the best induction programs cannot compensate for an unhealthy school climate, a competitive teacher culture, or an inappropriate teaching assignment" (2003, p. 28). Further, Bandura (1997) contended that beliefs about the teaching task and assessment of teaching competence are unlikely to change unless compelling evidence results in reevaluation.

Hence, to engage teachers in personal and systemic change, we concur with Fulton, Yoon, and Lee's (2005) recommendation of creating learning communities. Within a learning community, teachers "transform their personal knowledge into a collectively built, widely-shared, and cohesive professional knowledge base" (Fulton et al., 2005, p. 1). They further stressed that isolated teaching in stand-alone classrooms no longer meets the needs of today's teachers or students. Rather, quality teaching is fostered within a supportive community that provides opportunities for learning, reflection, and transformation (Fulton, et al., 2005).

Within the learning community, a knowledgeable other or expert, such as a mentor, peer, or teacher, guides the learner through the zone of proximal development (ZPD). According to Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs within the ZPD, which is the area that falls between the actualized and potential developmental levels. Novice teachers as learners, need assistance through their ZPD from knowledgeable others (Dennen, 2004; Gallimore & Tharp, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore, 2001). Knowledgeable others assist novice teachers' learning by engaging them in reflective practices about diverse learners, by modeling diversity pedagogy, and by providing critical feedback on meeting the needs of diverse learners (Hoffman-Kipp, Artiles, & Lopez-Torres, 2003). As a result, the teacher, as a learner, moves toward independent proficiency (Hoffman-Kipp et al., 2003).

Context

Given ethnic teacher representation (17% are minorities), retention (67% in the third year), and flight (50% in the 5th year) from the profession (Flores & Claeys, 2010), the Academy for Teacher Excellence (ATE) was established with the overarching goal of increasing the number of Latino and other minority teachers in the critical teaching shortage areas. An additional goal was to prepare all teachers to become culturally efficacious – teachers

who are culturally competent, possess strong teaching efficacy, and demonstrate sociocultural consciousness (Flores, Clark, Claeys, & Villarreal, 2007). While other components comprise ATE's comprehensive research-based model (Flores et al., 2007) including Faculty Research and Development (Reybold, Flores, & Riojas-Cortez, 2006), and School Partnerships (Flores & Claeys, 2010), the focus of this paper is the Teacher Academy Learning Induction Community (TAILC), which provides direct support services to candidates, interns, and novice teachers.

ATE emphasizes the concept of teachers' holistic – academic, personal, and professional – development within a community of learners. Since minority and low-income college students are often derailed on their path to acquiring a baccalaureate degree, ATE assumes a proactive stance to assure their retention and success (Flores, Claeys, & Wallis, 2006; Flores et al., 2007). Upon their arrival to the university as freshmen or transfer students, the ATE recruits candidates into the Teacher Academy Learning Community (TALC). TALC provides academic support and leadership development to candidates, while assisting them in navigating and overcoming institutional barriers (Flores et al., 2006, 2007). Within a community of practice, learning is situated within the teaching context and is viewed as a social practice (Dennen, 2004; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

When teacher candidates enter into their professional year, which consists of methods courses with related fieldwork and student/clinical teaching, they are transitioned into the Teacher Academy Induction Learning community (TAILC). Also invited into TAILC are mid-career individuals enrolled in the graduate certification program and hired as teacher interns. Within these communities of practice, induction mentors guide teacher candidates through their zone of development in the acquisition of skills and the internalization of knowledge (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Beyond serving as a support structure, the learning community assists participants through a continuum of learning to teach. This process begins with teacher preparation, progresses through induction, and continues with professional development (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Since teachers learn not only from experts, but also from each other, as Darling-Hammond (1997) has suggested, the community of practice provides teachers as learners the space to begin theorizing, deliberating, and reflecting about practice. As per Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005), induction programs' visions should guide activities. Hence, TAILC's goals within a community of practice are to (a) scaffold candidates/interns' learning as they transition to the profession, (b) assist novices to become culturally efficacious, and (c) retain them as teachers.

ATE is currently in its seventh year of implementation. A number of the TAILC candidates are in their professional year, which occurs prior to the first year of teaching. Other TAILC participants include novices in their

initial years of teaching. We have been working diligently with a group of TAILC candidates ($n = 69$) to provide support commencing in their professional year. In this manuscript, we examined the effectiveness of the TAILC as a support structure. More recently, in addition to face-to-face mentoring, ATE has developed an eCommunity of Practice to further support novices; however, this discussion is beyond the scope of this current article.

Theoretical Framework

To understand the complexities of teacher development, it is important to situate learning within the sociocultural context in which teachers actualize their craft. Taking a sociocultural perspective, we suggest that teachers' zone of proximal development encompasses concurrent academic, personal, and professional development strands. While teachers' academic development occurs mostly in classroom settings, learning takes place within professional contexts. Personal development commences when participants become part of a learning community and continues as they journey into the profession. Similarly, their professional development begins during their professional year and continues throughout their teaching careers. Learning to teach then, as is the case for teacher candidates, is a complex multidimensional experience grounded not only in academic, personal or professional interactions, but also in engaging them as members of a community of practice (Dennen, 2004; Lave & Wenger, 1991). While the development of the teacher is multidimensional, in this paper we focus on the learning community's personal and professional strands in supporting teachers' zone of proximal development.

Communities of Practice

Within a learning community, the personal development of teacher candidates/interns and novices is scaffolded by assisting them to critically examine their identity, assumptions about others, and their own privilege. Only through a rigorous examination of long-held perceptions and apprehensions of others can they come to appreciate students' diverse backgrounds as valuable sources of knowledge (Moll & Arnot-Hopffer, 2005). Teacher candidates, interns, and novices must continue to explore their teacher identity as an intersection of cultural consciousness, self-conceptualizations, and belief systems (Flores et al., 2007). Furthermore, by reflecting on their own privileged status, teachers can learn to ally themselves with their not-so privileged students and to name the material and structural realities found in disenfranchised communities (Moll & Arnot-Hopffer, 2005).

Since teacher candidates/interns hold implicit theories of the learning process, their experiences as learners influence personal beliefs about how others acquire knowledge (Flores, 2001). Several researchers have noted how

these epistemological theories often reflect naïve and simplistic views (Brownlee, Purdie, & Boulton-Lewis, 2001; Flores, 2001). Assisting teacher candidates/interns to articulate and reconceptualize their pedagogical epistemologies within a learning community creates new ways of thinking and discourse, thereby affording them the ability to connect theory and make sense of practice (Flores, 2001; Wood & Bennett, 2000). Reflecting on their personal and teaching efficacy can further assist teachers in their zone of proximal development. Onafowora (2004) recommended that novice teachers have multiple experiences observing and interacting with master teachers that teach in a diverse setting. Similar to Dennen (2004), we suggest that apprenticeships can assist teacher candidates/interns as learners in attaining effective practices and teaching efficacy. These are derived from mastery experience, vicarious experience, modeling, or persuasion sources, with the goal of successful performance through goal setting, effort, persistence, and resiliency (Bandura, 1997). These experiences allow novices “to see and experience how-to bridge the gap between their cognitive and affective capabilities” (Onafowora, 2004, p. 41). Sharing these experiences within the learning community provides for critical dialogue and reflection.

It is also important that teachers engage in reflection about the classroom demands that often cause high levels of stress (Strong, 2005); yet teachers are not directly prepared to deal with stressors as in other helping professions (Guerra, Flores, & Claeys, 2009). Furthermore, teaching within the classroom requires teachers to persevere in finding solutions to challenges and confront stress. The LIBRE (Listening, Identifying, Brainstorming, Reality Testing, and Encouragement) model (Guerra, 2006; Guerra et al., 2009) provided the framework for guiding teachers in problem-solving and stress-reduction. The LIBRE model uses a cognitive strengths-based problem-solving approach in the identification and resolution of personal and professional challenges. Engaging teacher candidates/interns/novices in problem-solving through the LIBRE model has shown promising outcomes for developing self-efficacy (Guerra, 2006; Flores et al., 2007). Teachers must be guided to analyze the sociocultural context within their classroom, school, and the community. Understanding these contexts assists teacher candidates/interns and novices to analyze issues of language choice, power, authority, and privilege (Darder, 1997) and to view communities as rich sources of knowledge worth studying, documenting, sharing, and celebrating. This resolve strengthens the teachers’ cultural competence and efficaciousness (Flores et al., 2007).

Thus, within the learning community, the reinforcement and construction of new strategies and ideas may assist novices in becoming culturally efficacious. This is vital since teachers with positive or high levels of teaching efficacy believe they can affect students’ achievement and motivation (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). In other words, teachers believe that their actions – what they do in the classroom contributes to

students' overall academic performance. Induction mentors promote novices' efficacy by demonstrating "how-to enhance their teaching and pedagogical skills" (Onafowora, 2004, p. 41). Contrary to romanticized ideals, the teaching profession requires novices to apply theory to practice within complex, often less than the ideal working conditions. As Kardos and Johnson (2007) noted, novices are expected to be experts, often with no integrated, comprehensive induction support. Novice teachers undergo a period of adjustment (Flores et al., 2007). In addition to being novices to the practice of teaching, they are also newcomers to particular school community cultures. As newcomers, they experience stressors beyond everyday classroom management, lesson delivery, and assessment. This daily vulnerability carries over into their personal and professional lives (Swanson, O'Connor, & Cooney, 1990). As they struggle to navigate unfamiliar social contexts while attempting to develop positive professional relationships with colleagues and superiors, novices also struggle to define what student issues are within their sphere of influence (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

Quality Induction Programs

Given this challenging transition period, we suggest that quality induction activities are crucial to the retention of new teachers. Understanding induction as an enculturation process requires recognizing that working conditions and school culture powerfully influence the character, quality, and, performance of novices. Induction support is considered crucial in the professional development of teachers. Teacher induction researchers cite that existing studies do not conclusively establish the program components that have the greatest potential to affect the quality and retention of beginning teachers (López, Lash, Schaffner, Shields, & Wagner, 2004). Perhaps the difficulty lies in the use of terms. For example, terms like induction and mentoring are used interchangeably as are mentoring and coaching (Dennen, 2004). In this paper, similar to Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005), we consider induction to be the overarching organizing structure that includes mentoring and coaching components. Dennen's extensive review suggested that mentoring has three critical components: teaching, learning, and reflection. Mentors use their expertise to help novices as learners (Dennen, 2004; Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005). Mentors further help mentees understand the rationale behind certain procedures or processes, and what relationships exist within entities or individuals, as well as assess mentees progress towards their professional goals and meeting learner's needs (Dennen, 2004; Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005). Whereas the mentor provides general support, the coach focuses on specific skills (Dennen, 2004; Tomlinson, 1998), such as attaining higher-order questioning strategies. Thus, the focus of coaching is learning to teach effectively. Since the focus of this paper is on induction programs, we focus on that extant literature.

López et al. (2004) reviewed empirical research to explore: (a) the effect of induction programs on teacher retention and quality, particularly student achievement; and (b) the components of induction programs that have the most capacity for improvements in teacher retention and quality. Lopez et al. observed that despite the paucity of research, some effective components have been identified. Effective induction programs: (a) embraced selecting mentors, who model best practices; (b) built expert and novice mentoring relationships; (c) promoted a developmental stance toward beginning teachers; (d) provided a supportive, collegial work environment; and (e) involved novices in self-assessment (Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, & Yusko, 1999). Other key components included: (a) orientation programs, (b) quality, structured mentoring, (c) common planning time with assigned mentor, (d) intensive and ongoing professional development, (e) external network of teachers, and (f) standards-based evaluation (Whisnant, Elliot, & Pyncheon, 2005). However, other researchers have criticized US models of teacher induction and suggested that there are three missing essential elements: high degree of structure, a focus on professional learning, and an emphasis on collaboration (Britton, Raizen, Paine, & Huntley, 2000; Whisnant et al., 2005; Wong, Britton, & Ganser, 2005). Torres-Guzmán (1997) explicated that in the case of bilingual teachers, mentors should be matched to mentees by language and certification. She suggested that matched dyads can collaboratively engage in planning instruction for English learners that is culturally and linguistically relevant, cognitively and linguistically appropriate, and transformative and empowering through social justice.

Specifically, Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) found that induction support for first year teachers reduced social isolation and minimized abandonment of educational goals. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) concurred that mentoring novices does affect teacher retention and lessens mobility. Fuller (2003) noted that providing Texas beginning teachers with mentoring support did influence their retention even in high minority and high poverty schools. In comparison to unsupported teachers, mentored teachers attained greater professional expertise more quickly and their students' achievement was higher.

Conversely, Isenberg's et al. (2009) examination of one- and two-year induction mentoring programs found no significant effect on classroom practices, student achievement, teacher satisfaction or retention. However, Davis and Waite (2006) demonstrated that teacher retention and satisfaction are improved in extended induction programs that emphasize academic rigor. Strong (2005) surmised that comprehensive induction programs providing enhanced support are likely to influence teacher retention. Consequently, multi-year induction integrated programs with a strong mentoring component in collaboration with school districts are recommended (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

Unlike other induction programs, TAILC's support commences early within teacher preparation and continues through the novice years in collaboration with school district partners (Flores & Claeys, 2010). In our estimation, a comprehensive teacher induction program, which includes mentoring and coaching, addresses the teachers' development along a continuum within a community of practice model. While the academic preparation may ground candidates, often the actual classroom reality differs greatly from theoretical perspectives, thereby resulting in ethical dilemmas for novices (Reybold, Flores, & Riojas-Cortez, 2004). Consequently, novices' experience disconnects between theory and practice. With on-site guidance and coaching, and regular opportunities within the learning community to address the complexities of teaching and learning with experienced mentors, we suggest that novices can reach their full potential – not only by staying in the profession, but also by improving learning for all students. The main purpose of this manuscript is to examine the effectiveness of the induction support provided to teacher candidates/interns as they transition into the teaching profession.

Research Methodology

This case study is an analysis of the Academy for Teacher Excellence's (ATE) support provided by the Teacher Academy Induction Learning Community (TAILC). Using a sociocultural theoretical framework, we define induction as a support system in which induction mentors, as knowledgeable others/experts, guide novices through their zone of professional development, as defined/conceptualized by Gallimore and Tharp (1990), within a community of practice model. The following main research question guided our study:

1. How is ATE's induction support effective in assisting teacher candidates/interns' transition from their teacher preparation program into the teaching profession as novice teachers?

In addition, these follow-up questions are also explored with the subunits of analysis.

2. What dilemmas do teacher candidates/interns/novices face during periods of transition, for example, from teacher candidate to novice teacher?
3. What is the role of the induction mentors within a community of practice?

Participants

This study included 69 teacher candidates/interns, who participated in the TAILC support services. For the purpose of this paper, teacher candidates

are undergraduates pursuing their degree and certification. Teacher interns are graduate students who are pursuing certification and are hired as teachers of record while completing certification course work. Approximately, 25 candidates/interns have been hired for bilingual education or special education classrooms at the elementary level. In addition, 44 teacher candidates/interns have been hired as mathematics or science teachers in middle or high schools. All of these 69 novice teachers are currently in their initial years of teaching and serving culturally and linguistically diverse students in Title I schools. While the majority is Latino (67.43%), the remainder represents other ethnic groups: White (21.3%), Black (6.1%), Asians (2.7%), Native-American and Pacific Islander (1.3%), and Middle-Eastern (1.3%). Of these, 81% are female and 19% are male.

The six induction mentors, working with the 69 novices, average 20 years of teaching and are considered master teachers. Two specialists, who are doctoral candidates, work with the bilingual and special education novices. Two of the four mathematics and science induction mentors have a master's degree, while the other two have doctorates in education. Pseudonyms are used for all participants. While not within the scope of this article, ATE does provide induction mentors ongoing professional development to become culturally efficacious mentors.

Data Collection and Analysis

We used an embedded case study approach to explore the effectiveness of the TAILC. While the main unit of analysis is the TAILC, embedded subunits include the mentors, and the candidates, interns, and novices (Yin, 2009). According to Creswell (1998), a case study (a) displays clear boundaries in time and place, (b) utilizes multiple resources and contextual material to construct an in-depth picture, and (c) invests time in describing the context with detail and through themes. Multiple data sources also allowed us to investigate the phenomena from historical and current perspectives (Yin, 2009).

Multiple data sources were systematically collected across time as participants progressed through degree completion and/or teacher certification. Data for this study included: communiqués, classroom observation notes, open-ended questionnaires, reflective prompts, needs assessments, seminar evaluations, induction mentors' notes, and outside evaluator reports, which included principal interviews. Since we were seeking to determine what services were most effective in the retention of teachers, we relied on first-person reports as well as the collective reflections of their mentors and career transition guides. The induction mentors' role as observers, interviewers, and participatory researchers is the human as instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To triangulate the multiple data sources, the team initially converged the evidence (Yin, 2009) by culling the data and identifying commonalities across the data. Using a recursive process, we compared and contrasted

emergent ideas until we arrived at satiated themes. Then induction mentors, as participatory researchers, shared emerging findings with participants and we requested that they validate our understandings. Through this member-checking process, we were able to further clarify our conclusions. In sum, trustworthiness was achieved through the multiple data sources, triangulation, member-checking, and team debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Findings and Discussion

The purpose of this embedded case study was to examine the effectiveness of the TAILC model, as the main unit of analysis, for supporting candidates/interns and novices. To assess the effectiveness of the TAILC model, it is important to understand the complex dilemmas faced by candidates/interns during their initial apprenticeship period and to examine the role of the induction mentor. We identified two meta-themes: the (a) initial apprenticeship period prior to employment and (b) proactive induction and mentoring components during apprenticeship as a novice teacher.

Initial Apprenticeship Period

Our findings suggest that the apprenticeship period begins during the certification professional year, which commences when the candidate begins certification courses with specific fieldwork, followed by student/clinical teaching, and continues through the first years of teaching. Three themes emerged from data that focus on this initial apprenticeship period. The first two themes present participants' ethical dilemmas: conflicting dilemmas and questioning competencies. The last theme in this section is the induction mentors' role in building trust to assist candidates/interns/novices during this transitory period.

Conflicting dilemmas. During the initial apprenticeship period, teacher candidates/interns report feeling eustress – excited but anxious, and having a positive sense of efficacy. They consider themselves as having the knowledge and skills needed to be successful teachers. Prior to entering the classroom as teachers, teacher candidates/interns articulate a critical, almost cynical perspective toward school community cultures and underestimate the pressures teachers face. Some candidates are critical of cooperating teachers' practices; for example, Selena, a middle-level mathematics student teacher, reveals:

I have tried to make suggestions to enhancing the lessons with technology and music. I told her what I plan on doing for the lessons I plan to teach. She comments that they are good ideas and usually points to the children's unruliness as being the reason she does not do those types of activities.

Similarly, interns are often critical of the educational system because they compare their experience to prior ones in the business world. Alicia, who had previously worked as a bank teller, for example, felt that her peer-mentor teacher did not know how to support her learning as an intern.

They tell me, here is the lesson, the materials, and that's it. They leave you alone. At the bank, it was not like this. They would show you something new and someone would guide you until you learned how to do it well. They would come and help. Not here, you have to learn how to teach on your own.

These perspectives may reinforce or represent an outsiders' view of teaching with a tangential interest in their fieldwork or student/clinical teaching assignments. These candidates do not feel that they have the power or authority to affect student learning in these circumstances. Other candidates' investment may be minimal, because they consider their field experience classroom assignment as not their "real class" or their "kids." While some student teachers report feeling a stronger attachment to their assigned class, perhaps as a response to the temporary nature as well as their limited teaching role, findings suggest that all create some social distance between themselves and the students. For example, student teachers reported feeling like guests and not wanting to upset the cooperating teacher. One bilingual student teacher shared:

Helping the kids is hard because I have my own ideas, but I'm not their teacher and I need to go with what the teacher wants. So I do my best, but I don't get too close. It will be different when I have my own class.

In the case of some interns, while hired as teachers of record, often they do not feel and are not considered full participatory members of the school community. Perhaps this is because interns have temporary teaching certificates and assignments with little to no job security; even as teachers of record, they created social distance between themselves, the students, and/or their peers. For some, perhaps social distance serves as a coping strategy during this initial apprenticeship period within the social context.

Questioning Competence

Regardless of teacher certification route (student teacher or internship), when novices enter the profession, they report feeling overwhelmed as they are solely responsible for students' learning. Success in other careers, as in the case of mid-career interns, does not guarantee an automatic sense of teaching efficacy. At this point, novices begin reevaluating their competency to teach and questioning whether the university prepared them for the realities of the profession. For example, a participant wrote:

The way professors talk, they make it sound like it's going to be a movie or something, you know? Like *Stand and Deliver*, if you work really hard the kids are going to work really hard with you... And it's just not reality. They bring in 'teachers of the year' to tell you how great it is. What they really need to do is bring in people who dropped out of teaching their first year so they can tell you why they left. That would be much more helpful and real. What do you do when the kids next door jump the teacher or your school doesn't let the kids take text books home or a kid is having a really, really hard life and school is just not their priority right now?

Guiding novices through this period of questioning and disillusionment, which sometimes leads to abandonment of teaching and career goals, requires a comprehensive support system. As Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) noted, "Unless we also take into account the fact that new teachers are learners, we may design programs that reduce stress and address immediate problems without promoting development" (p. 6). TAILC focuses on novices' development by reinforcing effective teaching methods along with strengths-based problem-solving training, within an emotionally supportive community.

Building Trust

To build a supportive community, induction mentors officially begin working with teacher candidates/interns during the professional year to better prepare them for their first year of teaching. Developing trust is an important aspect of the mentor and mentee relationship (Kardos & Johnson, 2007). The TAILC approach deliberately promotes *confianza* (trust) with teacher candidates/interns/novices. *Confianza* is a sense of trust and caring conveyed through a cooperative relationship between the mentee and induction mentor, in which evaluative feedback is accompanied by specific strategies. After graduation or certification program completion, continued support is offered through the induction program. The development of this early relationship also increases the sense of trust (*confianza*) between the novice and mentor. As Paula candidly reveals:

I have to be so careful with what I say on campus, everybody knows everything; nothing is secret. Even with my [campus] mentor, I need to be really careful in what I say and how so that she doesn't think I don't know what I'm doing. Si no pudiera hablar contigo de lo que pasa aqui, no podria hablar con nadie. (If I could not speak with you [induction mentor] about what happens here, I could not talk with anyone.)

In addition, induction mentors engage in a variety of in-classroom support activities that promote this sense of trust. These activities range from re-arranging classroom furniture, organizing and managing student data, and planning effective lessons.

Proactive Induction and Mentoring Components

Indeed, the role of the induction mentor is crucial in supporting novices and is vital in assuring the success of the TAILC. We have found that critical induction components include on-going communication and support between mentees and induction mentor through communiqués, pre- and post-classroom visitation conferencing, on-site coaching and mentoring as well as multiple interactive learning experiences that included summer institutes and daylong seminars, and career transition guidance. These appear to reaffirm novices' commitment to the profession and these are detailed in the subsequent section.

Communiqués. Communiqués are an important component of the induction support. Novices' constantly seek guidance and responses to a multitude of questions. Elsa, a bilingual education first year teacher, emails her assigned induction mentor:

My principal is coming in next week to observe me; she wants to see reading groups. I've attached my lesson plan for the morning. What do you think? I'm worried I'm missing something. Can you come in on Tuesday and just observe how centers go?

Often novices feel overwhelmed, frustrated, or are resistant to any assistance. The induction mentor must recognize this resistance and exercise patience for developing mutual *confianza*. Olivia exemplifies this tenuous relationship:

Wow, I didn't know you did classroom make-overs! I wish I had called you last semester when I really needed you, but I just wasn't ready for the help, you know? The thought of having someone in here, I just couldn't do it because I just didn't have time for the help. But this, this really takes me to the next level.

Once a sense of trust has been established with the induction mentor, novices seek advice and support via telephone calls or email. Venting about difficult or uncomfortable situations allows the novice to release some of the stress while at the same time discussing plausible solutions to particular circumstances. As the bilingual mentor states, "They need to feel heard and validated and also offered concrete support strategies."

Induction mentors support the novices to (a) organize their thoughts, (b) refocus by defining the issue, and (c) identify realistic solutions using prior knowledge acquired through the teacher preparation. Various exchanges may prompt either mentor or novice to schedule a conference to discuss challenges in detail. This generally involves a campus visit by the mentor to assist the novice in developing and actualizing an action plan.

Conferencing. Whereas communiqués may be informal regarding a variety of topics, conferencing is a formal process in which the goal is to help novices become culturally efficacious teachers who can implement effective diversity pedagogy. Induction mentors assist the novices in actualizing diversity practices through individual conferencing prior to and after classroom visitations. Weekly classroom observations are scheduled or sometimes based on novice requests.

During the pre-conferences, the induction mentor and novice discuss any challenges or accomplishments. In the case of challenges, using the LIBRE model (Guerra et al., 2009), the induction mentor engages the novice in a problem-solving activity by offering guidance or through active listening, via a reciprocal conversation. Induction mentors also highlight novices' accomplishments to encourage and reassure that they possess a wealth of tools and resources for becoming successful teachers. A plan of action is then developed to address challenges.

In addition to addressing challenges, the purpose of pre-conferencing is to anchor novices' lesson planning and delivery. Induction mentors dissect the multiple components of the lesson plan, guide novices' development of a lesson plan, critique the lesson plan, and assist in gathering resources for actualizing a successful lesson delivery. Now a successful, confident third year science teacher, Jacob reflects on being a novice:

They [mentors] were there to offer strategies. S [mentor] would come ask me...are you ready for next week? Lesson planning was a big struggle for me, just finding the time and that's where S would come in and say, don't worry, here's an idea, relax, take a deep breath. I would say lesson planning, classroom management, and just trying to stay above water, trying to breathe.

Post-conferencing provides induction mentors an opportunity to enhance novices' learning through critical feedback on how to improve practices and enhance student success. During this phase, it is important to provide novices with evaluative feedback in order to improve their practices (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008). A bilingual induction mentor states:

Once a novice teacher contacts the induction mentor... a field visit is scheduled... [During the classroom observation], notes are taken and then another conference is set up in order to give the novice teacher critical feedback as well as some suggestions on how to address any concerns.

Similarly, the mathematics and science mentors reflect in their journal after each visit. The journal entry describes the practices of a young male physics teacher, with mostly males (10) and four females in his classroom:

Creates a safe space for the [Mexican American] girls in the [physics] class to participate in math activities by pairing one of the girls in her boy friend's group. The other three are partnered up with two boys. The other five boys work together. Supports one of the young women in using the weight measuring tool correctly. Facilitates their full participation by getting down on his knees, as they have, to measure distance traveled by their "car."

In acknowledging the novices' sensitivity to gender, the mentor is reinforcing appropriate behavior displayed by the novice. Assessing novices' progress does not interfere with mentor-mentee relationship (Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008). Conversely, detailed reflection assists in providing critical feedback to novices, thus promoting their professional growth. As indicated by a mathematics novice, "the on-going support provided by master/mentor teachers" enables him to connect theory to practice.

Coaching. We define coaching as modeling, demonstrating, and guiding of pedagogical skill development (Dennen, 2004; Tomlinson, 1998). The goal of coaching is to capitalize on the novices' strengths and newly acquired knowledge in order for them to become culturally efficacious teachers. Induction mentors assist novices by modeling culturally relevant practices and unpacking their prior learning about practice to create an optimal culturally responsive learning ecology. First year novices, like Adelia, are mostly concerned with classroom organization:

On later [field] visits, we planned the layout of the classroom, practiced using a grade book on the computer, and she organized my supplies closet. After my closet was organized, we discussed the resource materials available to me.

To scaffold novice teachers' application of best practices, induction mentors model culturally relevant lessons and strategies, demonstrate questioning skills, assist in the implementation of successful classroom management techniques, and facilitate assessment data analysis and curriculum alignment. An induction mentor comments:

If modeling of a lesson or strategy is requested by the novice teacher, the induction field specialist will then discuss this further with him/her. An opportunity will be given for the novice to implement the strategy modeled. Finally more feedback will be provided to the novice teacher.

As novices implement these best practices, the induction mentors further scaffold novices' development by providing in depth guidance, hence anchoring their learning in a non-threatening context.

Mentoring. In this paper, mentoring is a component of the induction program. In this role, induction mentors provide emotional support, advocate for the novice, assist the novice navigate the school's bureaucracy and culture, and promote the professional growth of the novice. While most school districts

assign a campus mentor, TAILC induction mentors provide additional support. Flores et al. (2007) found that additional mentor support is needed during the first year of teaching, because often the assigned campus mentors lack commitment, time, or training. As affirms Elisa, a third year physics teacher:

Our schools are supposed to provide us with a mentor our first year. (Laughing) I know, at least I was supposed to have been assigned one, I never met them. Still haven't met them (laughing)!

As previously mentioned, a trusting, professional relationship has been initiated between the induction mentor and novice. Yet, another goal of induction mentors is to assist the novice to gain *confianza* (confidence) in the classroom as a teacher and on campus as a member of the teacher community.

Often the novices' status undermines their confidence to question policies and procedures or request assistance for fear of reprisal, being perceived as incompetent, unknowing, or even disrespectful to their supervisors. Therefore, novices prefer sharing their concerns and questions with the induction mentor in an accepting, safe setting. Acting as a liaison between the novice and campus personnel, the mentor familiarizes the novice teacher with school district/campus culture and helps the novice acclimate to the school's culture. Mentoring provides an opportunity to engage the novice in problem-solving and goal-setting. A novice reflects:

The campus visits were very helpful. I felt I had support outside of my campus as well. I knew that if I needed to talk to someone about protocol, or processes, or reading test data I could get some answers. I like knowing that someone wants to know (and help if necessary) how I'm doing, now that I'm out in the "real world" of teachers.

Novices report that the induction support serves to reduce their anxiety and promote teacher self-efficacy, in which novices feel more competent in their teaching ability and in making a difference in students' lives. Mentors help novices recognize that different students have various learning and social needs depending on their particular circumstances. Julia comments: "She keeps me in touch, remembering to be an advocate you know, for children, especially our bilingual children." Julia's mentor validates her concern that students receive equitable support in the classroom.

Administrative response to school visits has been positive. In addition to visiting the novice, induction mentors meet with school administrators to familiarize them with ATE-TAILC services. These meetings facilitate acquisition of additional school resources for first year teachers. An induction mentor elucidates: "So for example if the administrator wants to see more centers implemented in the classroom, then I will outline the necessary resources to accomplish the task." Noteworthy, mentor and novice exchanges about administrator expectations or campus issues remain strictly confidential.

Our various school district partners have been impressed with the university's commitment to their students even after graduation as evidenced by the following excerpts:

Linda is a wonderful person and teacher, please let me know if there is anything else we need to do to support her... Linda is doing a great job! She had some great training with your program. (Principal 1)

Thank you again for meeting with me yesterday... It is this type of personal touch that allows your program to have such a fine reputation. Thanks! (Principal 2)

Other principals expressed a high-interest in strengthening the collaborative partnership to assist new teachers in their professional development and to ensure student success.

Multiple interactive learning experiences. To assist teacher candidates, interns, and novices' academic, personal, and professional development, multiple interactive learning experiences are provided vis à vis workshops, seminars, and institutes. Some interactive learning experiences are content-area specific and others are general in nature and are delivered by master teachers, ATE staff, and professors. To assure relevance, via surveys, evaluations, interviews, and observations, novices identified workshop topics.

The mere fact that I was getting help from someone who had traveled in my steps was very helpful. I could explain where I needed help and she (induction mentor) was able to target exactly what the issue was. I felt secure with the information I was given.

Another novice reflects on a seminar delivered by a TAILC second year science teacher: "I'm glad that you are calling on first time teachers to retell their experiences. This makes us feel more comfortable and makes us know that all the feelings are natural."

Focused seminars provide novices the opportunity to engage in critical dialogue about their role, beliefs, and daily practices. Teacher candidates and interns are familiarized with Moir's (1991) beginning teacher stages of development to give them the opportunity to anticipate and prepare for their transition to teaching. Victoria writes:

I think that talking about the pressure and expectations was helpful because one was advised and given a synopsis of how one would feel and that it was going to be a wave of emotions during the first year of teaching. Believe me: I related my feelings, stress and overwhelming of accomplishments to that [Moir's] chart provided during the summer institute... In other words I kept telling myself, "It is OK to feel this way – it will be over in June." Or on a more positive note – "I made it, I ca[n] not believe I made it this far."

Summer Bridging Institutes extend novices content knowledge, cultural teaching efficacy, and application of culturally relevant practices. After attending ethno-mathematics institute, Julissa replies:

I really was impressed of all the information that I gained today about the Mayan culture as well the mathematical concepts that can be applied. Those concepts include about the concept of 13 levels of the life cycle, the numerical symbols, and also, about the concept of the pyramid, which shows the 91 steps of life.

Spanish Language Seminars assist monolingual English-speaking or limited Spanish-speaking participants acquire basic skills and tools. Seminars emphasize using cognates, finding resources, and allowing basic communication skills and responses in the students' native language. Technology seminars engage participants in advancing their digital literacies for instructional purposes. Lori, a mathematics third year teacher's reflection, demonstrates the utility of these seminars:

I do have a new challenge this year, one of my classes has a significant number of ESL students in it and I really don't speak Spanish... But it really has been the case that I am trying to help a student and... he's going "once, once" [11 in Spanish], and I'm like "oh, 'eleven', yes you're right." You know, I mean, I'm really struggling that I'm hoping that this iTouch is going to give me a chance to maybe download some lectures in Spanish. . . I've been trying to give them written Spanish resources and... encourage them to tell me, what's the Spanish word for perpendicular? You know whatever just trying to get them you know more involved.

These multiple learning activities augment teacher knowledge and efficacy. Participants report a high level of satisfaction on seminar evaluations ranging 9.1 to 10 on a 10-point scale. Enriqueta captures the satisfaction best in her reflection:

I loved this! Now, instead of a calculator I'll just take one [Pre-Columbian Nepohualtitzin similar to Abacus] of these to class. I love this better than a calculator because it gives you a visual and better explanation to why the answer is what it is. It actually teaches you rather than just pressing calculator buttons.

Career Transitioning Guidance

Teacher candidates, interns, and novices are provided career guidance to deal with the personal and professional stressors encountered as they transition from university to the classroom. Employing the LIBRE model, participants engage in finding solutions to problems and promote self-care for becoming self-regulated learners. LIBRE is a cognitive problem-solving research-based model (Guerra, 2006) in which career transitional specialists – trained counselors guide participants through a strategic process of listing all their concerns,

identifying one problem to focus on, brainstorming solutions to this problem, reality testing their solutions, and finally offering themselves encouragement. Novice teachers can later utilize these strategies to problem-solve on their own and also with their students to facilitate their students' self-efficacy.

To prepare teacher candidates/interns for their employment interview, several support activities are offered including building their resources and portfolio development:

I attended the Build Your Classroom Day this past week. It was a wonderful opportunity to get great items for my classroom, as well meet professionals already in the field. TAILC, by having workshops like these, the lending of textbooks, and a connecting community of future educators, has helped me develop as a professional.

Along with developing a professional portfolio, teacher candidates/interns are provided with opportunities to showcase their portfolios and verbalize their marketable strengths through mock interviews. Jaime emphatically states, "It was a great assurance to know that someone was going to help you 'market' yourself for school districts." Mock interviews present teacher candidates/interns an opportunity to receive critical feedback:

Thank you so much for the mock interview and the helpful feedback. I didn't really prepare for it because I wanted to know how I would do in an interview naturally. Your feedback and suggestions were very constructive and I'm definitely starting to prepare this weekend for interviews... I won't let an interview be the reason that I'm not hired somewhere.

In sum, novice self-reports confirm that providing induction support requires addressing academic, personal, and professional strands within the teachers' zone of proximal development. The following novice sums up the effectiveness of TAILC:

I think that's beneficial that [the university] has a program like TAILC that they're still keeping in touch regardless of if you are a first year or third year teacher. They want you to know that you made a great decision in continuing your education and they're going to support you whichever way you go about it, but you're not going to fall through because you know, you picked a great program and a great school.

These reflections reveal that the transition from theory to practice is a difficult journey that cannot be left to chance. These novices had successfully completed their third year in the classroom. As novices progressed through their first years of teaching, they reflected on the challenges they faced. Often, these reflections provide evidence in the areas of needed or desired growth. After working with a group of bilingual kindergartners, for example, Anna decided she wanted to pursue a master's in speech pathology specifically focusing on bilingual learners:

I just think we really need gente [Latinos] to specialize in areas where there is a need and where we think we can make a difference. There are very few bilingual speech pathologists; I enjoy working with young children and I think I could be good at it.

Others see themselves as natural leaders. Jacob, a highly successful mid-career bilingual mathematics high school teacher, voiced a desire to enter administration based on his ability to bring his mathematics and science team together:

I was a student here in this classroom; I sat in those desks right there. When I see that other teachers who've been here longer want my lesson plans or materials to use with their students, I am happy to share the resources. But it also makes me think that in a few years I could be a really good administrator and get more teachers involved:

As first year teachers, both Anna and Jacob identified areas of need where their strengths and interests intersect in the interest of their students. Both of these novices project visions of themselves as leaders in high-need areas based on their experiences.

Based on preliminary analysis, TAILC appears to be meeting its primary goal of teacher retention well beyond their first three years. Approximately 85% teachers have been retained in high-need schools, as compared to non-participants (Claeys, 2011). TAILC participants report a high satisfaction rate and great degree of confidence. Claeys described how TAILC participants are dedicated to the profession and are going beyond the four walls of the classroom. TAILC participants' cultural efficaciousness is evident in their anecdotes regarding their approaches to teaching, engagement and relationships with students, and high commitment to the students and to the community in which they teach. They are actively involved in after-school events or extra-curricular activities, which conveys a genuine interest and care about their student and the community. In addition, three teachers won teacher of the year awards in their districts; others assumed leadership positions as department chairs. The students in these teachers' classes are experiencing academic success as measured by district or state mandatory tests. Teachers proudly revealed their success: "My district assessment scores with my sixth graders, I have a 90 percent passing rate."

Conclusion

The Academy for Teacher Excellence (ATE) has developed and field-tested a pilot induction program. The ATE's Teacher Academy Induction Learning Community is research-based and supports teacher candidates along a continuum commencing in the professional year through the novices years. Given the critical shortages of teachers in the areas of bilingual,

mathematics, science and special education, one of the major goals is to retain successful, effective teachers.

We surmised that to begin addressing this retention goal, we must recognize the teachers' zones of development. While teacher education programs address teacher candidates' zone of proximal development, even when situated in context, these experiences only approximate in actualizing the realization of the craft. Moreover, these apprenticeships have often only afforded teacher candidates a peripheral membership into the profession and a panoramic view of school. The actualization of the craft and becoming a member of the profession is situated within the classroom and school setting.

However, upon entry into the profession, novices often continue to see themselves as peripheral members of the teaching profession. The existing members of the community, experienced teachers and administrators, may not necessarily support the novice's development. Thus, while newly indoctrinated into the profession, novices begin questioning themselves and their preparation. Often, novices find themselves isolated without a support system; it is no wonder they leave the field. It is at this critical juncture that we must guide novices to move beyond the periphery, while providing them the tools for maintaining a critical lens to evaluate their own practices, reaffirming their commitment to the profession, and advocating for their diverse students. Through a comprehensive community of practice, novices' zone of development was supported to assure their success and retention.

While other induction programs have similar components, unique to TAILC is the personal development that assisted participants in acquiring strengths-based problem-solving skills that will serve them in different situated contexts. Still other programs solely focused on mentoring novices, whereas TAILC supported teacher candidates/interns commencing in the teacher preparation program and through the first three years of teaching. Also distinctive is the ultimate goal for novices to be culturally efficacious, which is critical in schools serving low income, minority, and English learners. Although other induction programs exist, few focus on the needs of teachers in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms. Recognizing that novices may need support beyond the regular day and that additional demands consume time, we have established an eCommunity of practice in which novices can engage in dialogues about concerns.

Constant professional contact, goal setting, and self-efficacy promotion are valuable tools anchoring novices' learning that will help them achieve many years of success in the classroom. Developing strong efficacy beliefs in novices is crucial to their career development and satisfaction as well as to their students. Isolated teachers have limited opportunities for receiving assistance through modeling and feedback and lack assistance crucial to acquisition of complex social repertoires. Teacher preparation can provide

cognitive structuring, but that alone will not assist teachers to develop new repertoires of complex social behavior necessary to teach-as-assisted performance within the ZPD. We contend that engaging candidates/interns and novice teachers through their zones of development within a learning community in which expert teachers scaffold learning may be the bridge between theory and practice.

Implications

We contend that the induction program presented can serve not only to support the retention of Latino teacher candidates, but can be used as a model to support other candidates working with diverse populations. We cannot underscore that the success of any induction program is dependent on those delivering the support services. Often mentors are selected or nominated because they are judged as master teachers and have had numerous years of successful teaching experience. We suggest that the role of induction mentors, as they engage in mentoring, coaching, and conferencing, is critical in helping the novice. As experts, mentors use their professional judgments, formative assessment, and reflections to determine what to focus on and address in conferences, and how to best meet the needs of the novice. Given the important roles mentors play, we cannot simply assume that they will have the specific skills needed to support teachers' development. Lastly, even beyond the first year of teaching, novices are confronted with new challenges whether it is grade level assignment, content area preparation, or students with varying needs. Educators cannot simply assume that during their first year of teaching, novices will have all the varied experiences to meet the challenges that arise with each new school year. Hence, the induction program must continue to support novices as they acquire independence across a variety of demands.

Future Areas of Research

Without a doubt, research on induction programs is needed. Further evidence needs to be gathered overtime to determine the long-term impact of induction on teacher retention and student achievement. A comparison study examining retention and success of participants with a random sample of non-participants would also lend greater credibility to the TAILC approach. Tracking teachers' conceptions of their roles in high need areas (bilingual, mathematics, science, special education) across time may shed light on the interaction between their personal ideals overtime and the challenges they face in the classroom. This may further illuminate how school cultures influence how teachers define their roles. Exploring the impact of an eCommunity of practice to support novices may also unravel the challenges teachers face that have yet to be uncovered.

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