

# Program Impact Evaluation Workbook

*For induction and mentoring programs:  
How to do research on your own program to evaluate its impact*

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## Workbook overview

If you are planning, coordinating, managing, or working in an induction and mentoring program, you want to know what impact the program is having. This workbook will help you make a solid plan for doing this research. It will:

- provide general advice on doing research and evaluation,
- suggest different ways to examine and measure impact,
- list samples of impact evaluation tools, and
- provide space for you to plan your own impact research.

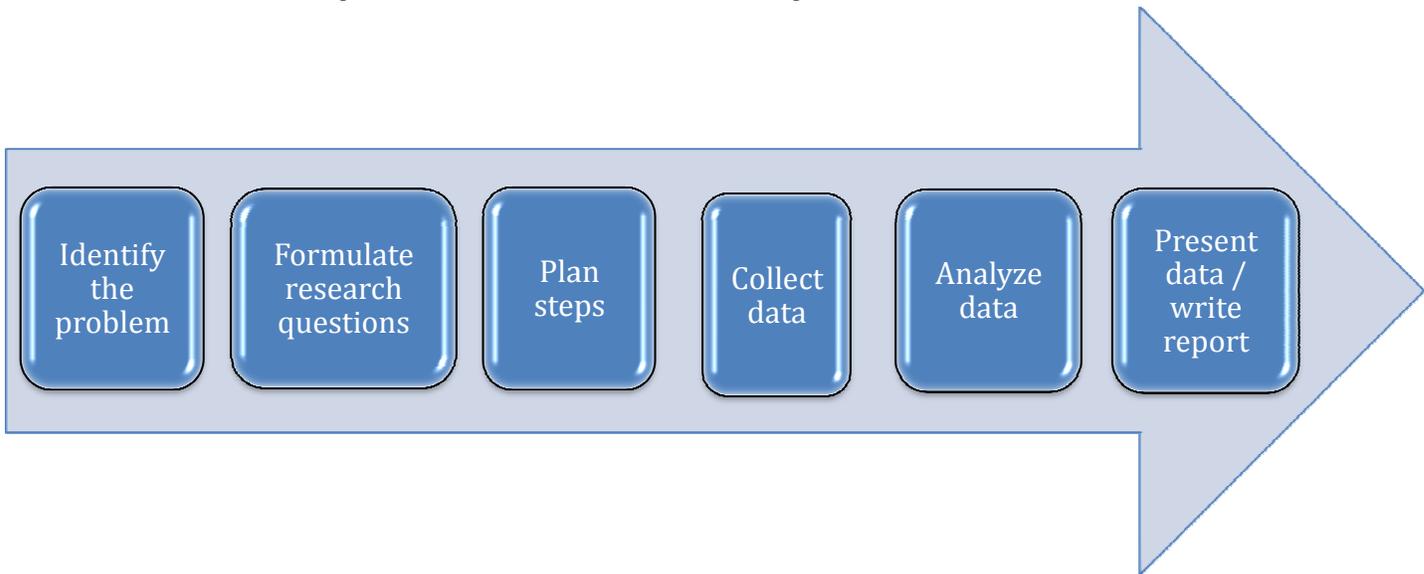
Working in schools is necessarily “messy” and strict prescriptions do not work because all school districts look very different. Therefore, we will provide a wide menu of options to ensure the flexibility necessary to adapt strategies and measurement tools to the needs of your program.

This workbook is not intended to help you evaluate individual new teachers. It is intended instead to offer advice on evaluating the impact of an entire program. This can aid the program in a process of continual improvement, and it can also provide data to show others (e.g. school boards) the impact your program is having.

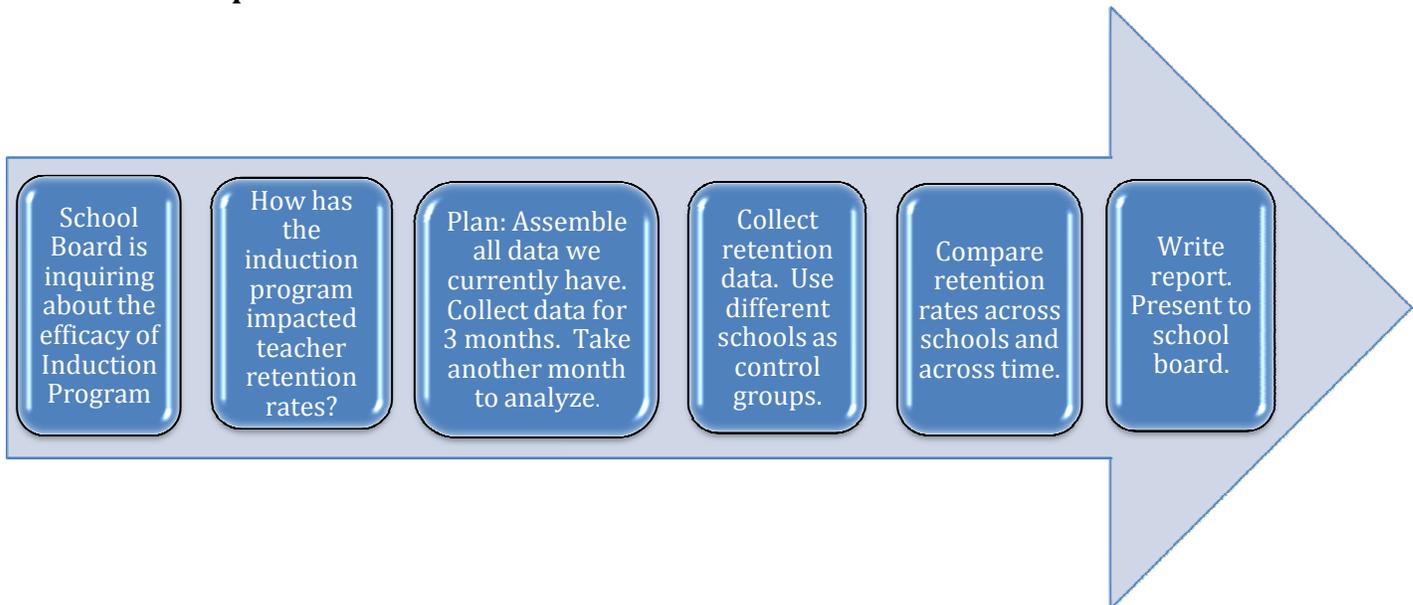
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## Basic Steps of an Evaluation Project



### Example:



## Why do you want to do research?

You need to first consider *why* you want to conduct this research.

- Do you need research to show your school board or administration that induction is important? If so, what research would they find most compelling? Would they like to see numbers (e.g. retention data), or would they prefer stories and testimony (e.g. from interviews with new teachers)? Are they interested in impact on new teachers' job performance or on student achievement, or would they like to see new teacher satisfaction ratings?
- Do you want research to help you improve the induction program? If so, which areas concern you most?
- With whom will you be sharing your research findings?
- What result do you hope that your research findings will have?

If you are new to doing research, you might want to start with a relatively simple project—something that is easy to set up and which involves easy-to-analyze data.

### Why do YOU want to conduct research?

## Setting up the research question

Next, you will need to consider *what impact* to investigate. The below document is from INTC's Research and Evaluation Coordinating Committee, chair: Dr. Beth Wilkins, Northern Illinois University. It lists a wide range of impacts that induction programs could examine.

### Areas of induction program “impact” to investigate

The INTC Research and Evaluation Coordinating Committee believes the following seven areas could be used to inform policy makers and educators about the “impact” of induction programming:

**Impact on Student Achievement.** This includes: higher grades, changes over time in motivation, increased standardized measurements, improved attendance, and reduction in discipline incidents.

**Impact on Beginning Teachers.** This includes: increased instructional effectiveness, confidence, self-efficacy, retention, and observation of best practice by experienced educators.

**Impact on Mentors.** This includes: change in teacher development level, increased instructional effectiveness, self-efficacy, peer coaching skills, and teacher leadership roles.

**Impact on Administrators.** This includes: change in the amount and quality of communication/feedback, awareness about beginning teacher needs, and increased support for induction programming.

**Impact on School(s).** This includes: changes in school culture, professional learning communities, and delivery of professional development services.

**Impact on Teacher Education Programs.** This includes: modifications to teacher education programs, course offerings, and curricular emphasis.

**Impact on the Profession.** This includes: higher return on investment; recruitment that leads to higher retention; changes in teachers' beliefs about professional development; increased willingness to mentor new teachers, and greater awareness about the importance of induction programming.

Notes:

- Some of these areas are nested or may overlap.
- Impact can be both “positive” and “negative.”
- It is difficult to isolate the impact of induction and mentoring from other variables in a teacher's career.

It is important to tailor your research to your district. Districts with high attrition rates may be far more interested in increasing retention, while well-established programs might be curious about impact on new teacher classroom performance, and newer programs may be more interested in new teacher satisfaction.

**What specific impacts are YOU interested in researching?**

Think about how you might convert this into an answerable question, such as:

- How satisfied are beginning teachers with their monthly induction workshops?
- How have beginning teachers' classroom management skills improved (or not) during their first year in the classroom?
- How does the mentor program improve the mentors' confidence in their own teaching?
- What impact does induction and mentoring have on student achievement?

For a richer question, do not phrase it in a way that invites a yes/no response.

**What research question do you want to answer? Be as specific or general as you like.**

## Types of research

Most research can be divided into two types, each with its own benefits and challenges.

**Quantitative** research involves numbers and things that can be quantified. For example, you could use district retention data to find out how many new teachers left the district in 2010. Or, you could look at ISAT tests to compare the scores of students whose teachers are or are not participating in your induction program. Another possibility could be to survey your new teachers and ask them to rank each new teacher workshop on a scale of 1-5.

- Benefits: Data can be easy to compare. Data can be persuasive (e.g. to school boards). It's hard to argue with numbers. Findings are often generalizable.
- Drawbacks: There is only so much that can be understood with numbers. If a teacher attends a workshop and rates the overall quality of the sessions, on a scale of 1-10, what does a 5 really mean? Why did she feel this way?

**Qualitative** research involves things that cannot be counted. Researchers are interested in impressions, feelings, personal stories and the context of the study. For example, you could interview beginning teachers to find out how they feel about the support they received from their principals. Or, you could survey beginning teachers and ask what they most appreciated about their mentor and why. Or, you could conduct observations of new teachers and record your impressions.

- Benefits: Qualitative research can be more rich and detailed. It can illustrate the context to "humanize" the research without reducing the classroom or student into a number.
- Drawbacks: Qualitative research can be more time-consuming to conduct and to analyze.

**Will you use qualitative research, quantitative research, or both? Why did you make this choice?**

## Research strategies

**Surveys** are (relatively) quick and cheap to administer, and (relatively) quick and cheap to analyze, but do not provide the same depth of responses as do interviews and focus groups. Surveys can have quantitative questions (e.g. “Check which of the following topics you discussed with your mentor this year” or “On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best possible, how would you rank the following professional development sessions you attended?”) or qualitative questions (e.g. “Describe one positive mentoring moment”). Surveys can be anonymous or not; if anonymous, they can still ask for other demographic information, such as the respondent’s gender, grade level, or school name. Many surveys use a Likert scale, or a survey based on a scale of 1-5 (or any other range, such as 1-4 or 1-10), to demonstrate if we strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat agree, agree or strongly agree.

**Interviews** can be one-on-one to provide individual insights, or they can be used in focus groups to provide insights into a group’s thinking. In focus groups (interviewing small groups of participants), one participant’s answers can bias the responses of others, but it can be a benefit for participants’ answers to spur reflection in the others. Interview data are typically qualitative, although a quantitative study could translate interview data into numbers (e.g. “14 of the new teachers mentioned mentors as their greatest source of support, while six mentioned other colleagues”).

**Classroom observations** can take more time than other forms of research, but they are an excellent way to understand a teacher’s classroom performance. Observers should be trained so they look for the same items in each teacher’s classroom; most observations use a standardized tool, like a checklist or chart to fill in. Many researchers conduct multiple observations to understand the teachers’ growth over time. (E.g. a new teacher with excellent classroom management skills in May could have started the school year that way—or could have been struggling in September!) Also, teachers can have bad days or tough classes, and it is difficult to draw conclusions about a teacher’s performance from a single observation. These data can be qualitative or quantitative, depending on how they are collected.

**Document and artifact collection** can be used to examine teacher retention, new teacher performance evaluations, student standardized test scores, etc. These types of data can be difficult to collect. Some districts keep much of this confidential and would not allow its use in research. Also, it can be time-consuming to gather. (E.g. trying to gather standardized test score data for all of the students in your new teachers’ classes can be a monumental task).

Different methods are appropriate for different programs. In a small program, for example, it might be easy for the coordinator to personally interview each participating new teacher. A survey might be problematic because, with so few new teachers, it would be impossible to ensure confidentiality. A program administered by a consortium of several districts might find it very difficult to get new teachers together for focus groups and might also have a hard time collecting documents (e.g. retention records) from the various districts.

**Which of the above research strategies appeals to you? Which would be the best choice for your program, or for what you are interested in researching? Why?**

Look over the sample research tools and strategies in Appendix A. Think of one (or two) research methods that you think would be most effective, or most do-able in your current context. For this method, start to brainstorm some specifics, such as sample survey questions, or types of student data to collect.

**Here are some initial brainstorms I have regarding the above research project.**

## Other research considerations

**Demographic data:** You could ask for certain demographic information. (E.g. if the respondent is male or female, or what grade level s/he teaches, or whether the respondent is traditional-age or older.) This could help you understand differences between groups (e.g. perhaps elementary teachers are more pleased with your program than are secondary teachers).

**Which demographic data are easy for you to obtain? Which data might you want to collect for your research project?**

**Using pre/post data:** Gathering pre/post data—much like distributing a pre-test and a post-test to understand how much students have learned during a unit—can help you understand change over time. If you conduct classroom observations in May to determine the teaching effectiveness of your new teachers, you will have some idea which teachers are doing well. However, you won't know whether your strong teachers were struggling in September, or whether they started the school year as capable as they ended it. In other words, you won't know whether your induction program had any impact.

Similarly, one teacher's students may get great test scores in March, but that does not necessarily mean that she is a great teacher if the students also had great test scores the previous year. A better measure of teacher impact is to see how much each teacher raised the students' test scores from the previous year. You could also conduct interviews, distribute surveys, and gather quantitative data (such as student attendance records) at multiple times during the year or over several years.

**Would it be useful to you to gather data at multiple points in time? How so?**

**Control groups:** Some researchers have a control and treatment group. In the medical world, think of the control group as receiving the placebo (sugar pill) while the treatment group receives the experimental medication. In the world of induction, the treatment group could be a new initiative employed at one school while the control group at the other school maintains what you've always done. To gauge the success of the program, administer the same research (e.g. surveys, classroom observations) to both the control and treatment group, perhaps once early in the school year and another time later in the school year. However, many school districts are not able to use control groups. For example, they do not want to deny some new teachers access to the induction program just so they can examine the differences between new teachers with and without mentors.

**What kind of control groups could you use in your project? Or are they not feasible for your program or your research?**

**Anonymity and confidentiality:** With confidential data, the researcher knows the respondents' identities but makes sure to mask them when reporting the data to anyone else. This typically involves changing names to pseudonyms and changing all identifying data (e.g. changing the school name or the exact extra-curricular the teacher is involved in). With anonymous data, even the researcher is not able to match the data to the respondents. For example, if respondents do not write their names on a survey, they are anonymous because there is no way the researcher can tell which respondent completed which survey.

You are more likely to receive honest answers if respondents are assured of anonymity: if your surveys are anonymous, or if the interviews/focus groups are conducted by someone outside the induction program who promises to change all names before reporting to you. Even if you conduct all interviews yourself, you should assure your interviewees that their responses will remain confidential and you will change all identifying characteristics (e.g. telling a principal that "an anonymous male kindergarten teacher said \_\_\_\_\_" is not keeping the respondent anonymous if there are only one or two male kindergarten teachers in the district.)

If you want to distribute anonymous surveys, you might want to ask for certain pieces of demographic information, such as the respondents' subject taught, grade level, gender, or race. Make sure that each demographic category has several respondents. For example, if your program only has one science teacher participating, you might want to offer more general subject-area categories of "math or science" and "English or social studies" and "all other subjects" instead of asking for specifics (e.g. "earth science", "biology", and "chemistry").

**How will you maintain anonymity or confidentiality in your research work?**

**Keeping data organized:** Beyond accurate note keeping, keep all data in a secure location to protect confidentially. All loose notes might be best kept in a folder in a locked filing cabinet, and all electronic notes might be kept on a password-protected computer. You should also consider how to keep your data organized. It might be helpful to categorize your data between qualitative and quantitative. One folder on your computer could be for interview notes and another for student benchmark records. Analyses could be kept in another folder. You do not want to misplace data because it takes a great deal of time and effort to collect.

**How do you plan to keep your data organized?**

## Working with data

**Record keeping:** This workbook does not cover descriptive data, but you might like to keep track of the following anyway for your records: number of participants, demographics of participants, description of professional development sessions, etc. Demographics could include areas such as gender, grade or subject taught, school name, and number of years in the classroom. Having well-organized files might help you in a few years, when you want to examine changes over time, or when you need to remember exactly how you helped that incompatible mentor/new teacher pair.

**What types of records do you already have? What types might you want to start gathering?**

**Summarizing / finding themes / coding:** After you have collected all of your data, you will need to compile it in some way to help you answer your research question. If your data are quantitative, you need to summarize them in some way. This might involve figuring out averages (e.g. the average score a workshop received), ranges (e.g. the minimum and maximum score for each workshop), and medians. You might also divide, or disaggregate, your data in different ways to allow you to compare different groups. For example, you could compare the average score each workshop received from elementary teachers vs. secondary teachers or from new teachers vs. experienced teachers to see if there are any differences across the groups.

If your data are qualitative, you might start by looking for patterns or themes. For example, you could read through interview transcripts and notice that many new teachers talked about their principals and colleagues. You could use those themes as “codes” and identify all passages from the transcripts that mention principals or colleagues. Some people do this on the computer and use the cut-and-paste feature in their word processing program. Other people like to read through hard copies and then use different color highlighters, or different sticky notes, or even scissors and gluestick, to identify passages for each code. Working with qualitative data often involves much interpretation and intuition. Two different researchers could each—correctly—identify different themes and codes. After coding the data, you can read through all passages and look for similarities and differences.

In working with qualitative data, you could also look for commonalities or differences. Or, you could visualize your data through a Venn diagram. Each of your collected data either

overlaps or does not overlap with other collected data. We can call the area where data overlaps a “theme.” Where all data overlaps is the most compelling data, and areas where there is a moderate or little overlap is less compelling but may be worth reporting.

**How might you start to summarize the data you plan to collect? For example, will you calculate averages, compare data across different groups, and/or look for themes?**

**Analyzing / interpreting:** After you have summarized your data, you still need to figure out what it means for your program. This often involves your general knowledge, looking at other data sources, and intuition. For example, you might discover that secondary teachers rate your workshops less highly than do elementary teachers. What next? You might decide to gather more data. For example, you could invite some secondary teachers to participate in a focus group to find out what sort of workshops they would prefer. Or, you might decide to act on that information. For example, you could create new workshop topics specifically for secondary teachers. Or, you could decide that no action is necessary.

When you write a report or do a presentation on your research, you will need to summarize the data (e.g. “Elementary teachers gave the workshops an average rating of 4.9 out of 5, while secondary teachers gave them a rating of 4.7”) and also interpret it (e.g. “Because all of these scores are quite high, we concluded that the workshops are quite successful, and since resources are limited we propose making changes in other parts of the program.”)

**Are there other people in your organization who could help interpret your results?**

**Triangulation:** Have you ever had your picture taken and thought: “Wow, this picture looks NOTHING like me?” Maybe you were making a weird face or wearing an outfit that seemed to completely change the shape of your body. Maybe the photographer caught you from a weird angle or there was horrible lighting. Whatever the case, most of us chalk it up

to a bad picture, laugh, and move on. In the field of education, we should remember that points of data are only snapshots. Taking many snapshots from many different angles over the course of a school year will help us better understand what we are studying.

In an ideal world, you would gather different types of data to examine the same impact. For example, if you wanted to understand the impact of your induction program on new teacher performance, you could interview their mentors, interview their administrators, observe the new teachers in their classrooms at multiple points during the year, look at teacher evaluation scores, etc. You could then triangulate, or compare, all of these different research projects to gain a full picture of each new teacher’s growth and development.

However, with time and money in short supply, doing so much research is difficult. You will typically have to select the method of research that you think is the best—or that you think could actually be accomplished—but realize that you may have an incomplete picture of your program’s impact.

**What are at least three data sources that you could use to triangulate? Do you have enough resources (time and money) to triangulate this year?**

**Reporting and presenting:** After you collect your data, you will need some way to summarize it and share it with others. In sharing your data with others, consider your audience: What findings are they interested in? What questions are they likely to have? What will they find most interesting or compelling? Will you produce a written report, or a one-page handout, or an oral presentation?

**Which audiences will be interested in your findings? How do you plan to report your findings to them?**

## Caveats

Be wary of attributing causality. One new teacher’s students may have few discipline referrals—is this because the kids are naturally well-behaved, because she has great classroom management skills, or because she ignores all but the biggest discipline problems?

Drawing inferences from data can be tricky. If ice cream sales increase during the summer, and simultaneously the number of persons charged with assault and battery increases during the summer, very few people would be interested in discerning if eating ice cream *causes* aggressive outbursts. Similarly, you may have noticed that student test scores rose after you implemented a new mentoring program. However, you do not know for sure whether the improved test scores are the result of the mentoring or of a new reading series the district just launched or of more nutritious options on the school lunch menu.

Thus, when reporting your findings, you may wish to use language like: “Our findings suggest that there *may be* a strong relationship between a well-supported induction program and the promotion of student learning...”

Furthermore, many of the findings will not be generalizable to other school districts. Some aspects of successes and failures will be universal, and it is possible for school districts to implement aspects of your program. However, taking a recipe from another school district and creating a carbon copy in your school district is a recipe for disaster. Even neighboring school districts differ greatly, and there are no “magic bullets” in education. We have to research our own terrain to know what works.

## Appendix A: Sample ways to measure induction program impact on students

This section must begin with a very large caveat: It is impossible to precisely calculate the impact that an induction program has on students. There are so many factors that influence a students' performance—including their home situations, poverty level, the availability of tutoring, student health, community resources, school programs, a new classroom reading series, etc.—and a teacher is only one of these many factors. Additionally, there are many factors that influence a new teacher's job performance, such as formal and informal mentors, colleagues, graduate school courses, pre-service preparation, etc.

Nevertheless, you may wish to look at student achievement as one of several data sources regarding the induction program. Student achievement data could be used as a starting point for conversations with your new teachers or mentors, or as a basis for your own plans (e.g. for professional development sessions or for topics mentors should cover with new teachers).

### **Student test score or grade improvement:**

*Suggestions:* Just as some people are naturally photogenic and take great pictures, some students are better test takers than others. Thus, instead of simply looking at the snapshot scores that students receive while in the new teacher's classroom, compare each student's score to her/his score from the previous year to investigate how much the teacher may have improved those scores.

### **Student motivation:**

*Sample student survey or interview questions:* How much do you agree with each of the statements (agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree). Compared with a year ago, I am more excited now about going to school. I usually try my hardest in this classroom.

*Sample parent survey or interview questions:* In \_\_\_\_\_'s classroom, how motivated does your child seem to be to: learn more about the subject area? make his or her best effort? Would these responses be different for a different teacher? Why?

*Sample teacher survey or interview questions:* What percent of the students in your class seem motivated to put forth their best effort each day?

**Student behavior:** If students are not engaged in the assignments, they are not learning and in turn may be finding other ways to spend their time. Monitoring discipline/referral forms shape the understanding of how students are learning and may connect to observations of social/emotional growth.

*Classroom observations:* Step into each new teacher's classroom for two minutes and count the number of students on task. Repeat as many times as is practical.

**Student attendance:** investigate through school or teacher attendance records.

**All of the above and more:** surveys, individual interviews, or focus group interviews with students or parents. The purpose of interviews is to share personal stories and get impressions numbers won't be able to share. Interviews have great flexibility and may relate to any number of topics including climate, homework, relationships, and grades.

## Appendix B: Sample ways to measure impact on beginning teachers

**Beginning teacher satisfaction with the program:** investigate through surveys, interviews, or focus groups.

*Sample survey questions:* On a scale of 1 (completely irrelevant to my teaching) to 5 (extremely relevant to my teaching), how would you rate the induction program's workshop on classroom management?

*Sample interview or focus group questions:* If one of your friends were hired in our district next year, would you recommend that they participate in the induction program? Why or why not? Think about everything that has helped you get through your first year: induction program workshops, your assigned mentor, veteran teachers in the building, other new teachers, your friends and family, your administrator, etc. Who (or what) provided the most important support or help to your teaching?

**Beginning teacher confidence or self-efficacy:** investigate through surveys, interviews, focus groups, or journals. If your district has beginning teachers who did not participate in the full induction program, you could give them the same surveys or interview questions and then look for differences between the two groups.

*Sample survey questions<sup>1</sup>:* (Quantitative) On a scale of 1-4 (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree), how would you respond to the following statements? I am confident in my ability to teach effectively. If I really try, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students. (Open-ended) Please list the two most helpful and the two least helpful beginning teacher workshops that you attended.

*Sample interview or focus group question:* How confident do you feel in your ability to manage discipline problems in a classroom?

*Teachers' journals:* If beginning teachers in your program write journals or blogs or other reflective pieces, you can scan through them to get a sense of the teachers' confidence level and self-efficacy over time.

**Changes in beginning teacher classroom performance:** investigate through classroom observations, new teacher evaluations (e.g. by administrators), surveys of mentors, surveys of new teachers, and surveys of students. Often, these instruments are given at several points during the year in order to show change over time. If possible, try to use a control group (e.g. beginning teachers who are not participating in an induction program).

*Sample classroom observations:* Many districts have a standard classroom observation form. If yours does not, you can create one using the facets of teaching that are most important in your district or were most emphasized in the induction program.

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<sup>1</sup> These questions are taken from Wechsler, M. E., Caspary, K., Humphrey, D. C., & Matsko, K. K. (2010). *Examining the effects of new teacher induction*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International. This study is available for free download at <http://policyweb.sri.com/cep/publications/Joyce2-Examining%20Effects%20of%20Induction-April%202010.pdf>

- Some forms use a scale: e.g. On a scale of 1-5 (from 'not demonstrated' to 'mastered'), did the teacher's opening gain the class' attention and introduce the lesson of the day?
- Some forms use a checklist: e.g. Did the teacher clearly communicate the lesson's objectives to the students? Some forms involve counts: e.g. Every five minutes, count the number of students who appear to be on-task.
- Some forms are more open-ended: e.g. What evidence do you have that the teacher was adequately prepared for today's lesson?

*New teacher evaluations:* If your district makes regular, formal evaluations of new teachers, you can collect these to look for evidence of changes over time. It is expected that beginning teachers naturally improve over time, so you might need a control group (e.g. new teachers who are not participating in the induction program) to be able to make inferences on the impact of the induction program.

*Sample survey questions, for mentors:* For the following list of activities, please check whether your mentee has improved greatly, improved somewhat, not improved, or shown backward progress: Planning engaging lessons that take students' needs into account; managing the classroom to make for an orderly learning environment; handling discipline problems when they occur; etc. (Note: administrators could also answer many of these questions.)

*Sample survey questions, for new teachers:* Think about what your teaching looked like during the first month of school and what it looks like now. When you consider your growth over time, what impact did your mentor have? What impact did the new teacher workshops have? What impact did your principal or department chair have? What impact did your colleagues have? What were other significant impacts on your teaching?

*Sample survey questions, for students:* My class stays busy, and we do not waste a lot of time. This class is too easy. I have learned a lot in this class. This class makes me feel stupid. My teacher takes the time to learn how I feel about things. Kids often cause trouble in this class.

**Retention:** collect district retention data for each new teacher, preferably over a number of years, in various categories: e.g. still teaching in the same school; still teaching in the same district, but a new school; left the district voluntarily; asked to leave the district. To make possible inferences on the impact of the induction program, try to find comparison groups such as: new teachers who are not participating in the induction program; new teachers in other similar districts or in the same state; and/or district beginning teachers from various points in the past.

### Notes:

- For many of the above research ideas, you may wish to investigate **change over time**. For example, you might administer the same survey in September and in May to see how the beginning teachers' attitudes changed during the year.
- You might also want to consider having a **control group**, such as a group of new teachers who are not involved in the induction program. This could help you infer whether changes over the year are potentially due to the induction program or to some other cause (e.g. teaching skill typically improves over time, regardless of induction).

## Appendix C: Sample ways to measure impact on mentors

**Self-efficacy and confidence:** investigate through surveys, perhaps using a pre/post design (i.e. give the same survey in September and in May).

*Sample survey questions<sup>2</sup> regarding self-efficacy in the classroom:* On a scale of 1-4 (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree), how would you respond to the following statements? I am confident in my ability to teach effectively. If I really try, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.

*Sample survey questions regarding self-efficacy in mentoring:* On a scale of 1-4 (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree), how would you respond to the following statements? If my mentee were having difficulty in teaching a particular lesson, I would be able to help him or her improve instruction. I am confident in my ability to mentor effectively.

**Classroom performance:** investigate through classroom observations, teacher evaluations (e.g. by administrators), surveys of mentors, and surveys of students.

*Sample classroom observations:* see this subsection in “Sample ways to measure impact on beginning teachers,” above.

*Teacher evaluations:* If your district makes regular, formal evaluations of teachers, you can collect these to look for evidence of changes over time—or acceleration of progress after the mentor started working with new teachers.

*Sample survey questions, for mentors:* Think about what your teaching looked like last year and what it looks like now. When you consider any growth over time, what impact did your mentoring have?

*Sample survey questions, for students:* My class stays busy and we do not waste a lot of time. This class is too easy. I have learned a lot in this class. This class makes me feel stupid. My teacher takes the time to learn how I feel about things. Kids often cause trouble in this class.

**Peer coaching skills:** investigate through observations/videotapes of conferences, or through surveys of new teachers.

*Sample mentoring conference observation/videotape analysis:* Every two minutes during the mentoring conference, check the current activity: mentee telling a teaching problem; mentee telling a teaching success; mentee asking a teaching question; mentor offering emotional support; mentor providing advice; mentor asking questions to help mentee discover his/her own solution; off-task discussion.

*Sample new teacher survey:* On a scale of 1-4 (not true, occasionally true, often true, almost always true), please rate your mentor in the following areas. My mentor really understands my strengths and weaknesses in the classroom. If I am having difficulty,

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<sup>2</sup> These questions are taken from Wechsler, M. E., Caspary, K., Humphrey, D. C., & Matsko, K. K. (2010). *Examining the effects of new teacher induction*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International. This study is available for free download at <http://policyweb.sri.com/cep/publications/Joyce2-Examining%20Effects%20of%20Induction-April%202010.pdf>

my mentor can offer multiple suggestions for improvement. My mentor often guides me to figuring out solutions to my problems instead of always telling me how s/he would handle the problem. I feel safe bringing my problems to my mentor.

*Sample mentor survey:* What do you see as your greatest strengths in mentoring? What areas need the most improvement? What was your biggest challenge in working with your mentee this year? How could the situation have been improved?

**Notes:**

- For many of the above research ideas, you may wish to investigate change over time. For example, you might administer the same survey in September and in May to see how the mentor's attitudes changed during the year.
- You might also want to consider having a control group, such as a group of veteran teachers who are not involved in mentoring. This could help you infer whether changes over the year are potentially due to the mentoring program or to some other cause (e.g. a school-wide improvement effort).

## Appendix D: Sample ways to measure induction program impact on administrators and schools

Most new teacher induction programs are intended to impact new teachers (e.g. retention, quality, performance) and, thus, to impact students and their achievement. Many program coordinators are also aware of the impact that induction programs can have on mentors: re-energizing them, improving their own classroom performance, and bettering their peer coaching skills. Perhaps less apparent is the impact that induction programs can have on the rest of the school. Administrators may become more responsive to new teacher needs; veteran teachers who are not officially mentors may become more collegial or more interested in collaborative conversations. You may be interested in exploring these “indirect” benefits of the induction program:

**Administrator support for new teachers:** investigate through surveys, individual interviews, or focus group interviews with new teachers, mentors, or administrators.

*Sample questions for new teachers:* How often do you meet with your principal? What percent of these meetings are: one-on-one, in a small group with other new teachers; informal times to talk about the school and teaching, evaluations of your job performance. Do you feel you get enough support from your principal? What could your principal do to be more supportive? [Note: To examine change over time, you might want to gather these data for several years in a row.]

*Sample questions for mentors:* How long have you been a mentor with this program? Over that time, have you noticed any changes in the amount or quality of support that administrators have offered to new teachers?

*Sample questions for administrators:* Our new teacher induction program started in \_\_\_\_\_. Over the past \_\_\_ years, have you made any changes in the following areas? awareness of new teacher needs and issues; time you spend with new teachers; direct communication specifically with new teachers; time you spend with mentors; involvement directly in the induction program.

**School culture:** investigate through surveys, individual interviews, or focus group interviews with new teachers, veteran teachers, or administrators. If you want to explore change over time, you may wish to ask the same questions for several years, or you could phrase questions to ask about change over time (e.g. compared with two years ago, how much collaboration do you do with colleagues?).

*Sample questions for veteran teachers:* The new teacher induction program encourages beginning teachers to collaborate in planning lessons and solving problems. Compared with two years ago, how much collaboration do you do with colleagues? less, about as much, a little more, much more.

*Sample questions for administrators:* What changes have you noticed in the following areas over the past three years: teacher morale; teacher willingness to assist in areas outside of their specific job responsibilities; teacher collaboration; teachers trying new instructional approaches.

# Impact evaluation planning worksheet

Write your research question here:

Now, start to map out a timeline for this research. Think about the various steps in this research project. For example, if you plan to survey your beginning teachers you may need to develop a survey, show it to your mentors to get their feedback, administer the survey, provide an incentive for completion, collect the survey, compile the data, write a short report for your administrators, and present the data to your school board. Then, consider a date for each step (e.g. "If I'm going to hand out the survey at the new teacher reception in May, I'll have to run it by the mentors in April...")

List the steps you will need to take—from start to finish—to complete this research project. Next to each step, list a tentative date.

ACTION PLAN			
Action Steps	Completion Date	Person Responsible	Other Information

Action Steps	Completion Date	Person Responsible	Other Information

Think about any questions you still have about the process and what local or national resources (including the leaders of this session!) you can tap into to get your questions answered.

**At this point, here are the biggest questions I still have about doing this research project. For each, I've listed a resource I can contact.**