

**Designing a Successful New Teacher Induction Program:
An Assessment of the Ontario Experience, 2003-2006**

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Abstract

Pedagogues and practitioners alike accept the vital importance of an effective professional induction for new teachers. This paper examines the evolution of such a policy in Ontario, from a mandatory pencil-and-paper qualifying test for graduating teacher candidates, to a modest province-wide induction program for newly-hired teachers. It assesses programmatic strengths and weaknesses using both theoretical and practical templates of comparison, and notes the attention devoted to ensuring political validity with interested stakeholders. The authors conclude that the new program combines professional orientation with school-based assessment, while falling short in the crucial area of mentoring.

Introduction

As teacher candidates reach the end of their structured professional training, a similar thought strikes most of them. There is so much more to learn! Teacher development, they now realize, is an ongoing process and not a discrete event. Graduation with a Bachelor of Education degree, followed by receipt of an official teaching certificate, does not magically confer upon them all the knowledge and skills they will need to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Finding a job in the classroom is only the first step. At that point, they must quickly 'learn the ropes' in a particular school and school board, absorbing the nuances of both community expectations and a specific workplace culture, while at the same time surviving the 'trial by fire' of classroom management, instructional planning, lesson delivery, and student assessment. The task is frequently overwhelming. Many teachers drop out. Others become too soon jaded, their initial idealism replaced by a cynical survival mentality. Not infrequently, they are socialized to a mediocrity that 'works' in limited ways, but shuts the door to continuous learning. Instead of perpetual improvement, the way has been prepared for perpetual mediocrity.

The successful induction of beginning teachers, it is now widely recognized, is a vital link in what should be a career-long continuum of professional development. The first couple of years on the job seem to set the tone for the career that follows - or in too many cases, the career that is aborted. Few areas of educational reform offer as much potential for the improvement of student learning as does this one. Better teaching leads to more effective learning by students. Few would question this axiom. A better start to their teaching careers would produce more effective teachers. This, too, seems obvious. Putting it together, it is clear that careful attention to how we nurture novice teachers through their first years of on-the-job training will lead to far better learning outcomes for the students in their classrooms, clear through to the end of their careers.

Across North America, sustained interest in the beginning years of a teacher's career dates from the early 1980s. Following the disillusionment that marked both the liberalization of education in the Sixties and its opposite, the back-to-the-basics reaction of the Seventies,

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attention began to focus on the professionalization of teaching as one source of long-term school

improvement. In the words of one American expert, Linda Darling-Hammond, “professionalism starts from the proposition that knowledge must inform practice; its major goal is to ensure that all individuals permitted to practice are adequately prepared” (1990, p.288). Paper qualifications, however, proved to be an insufficient predictor of either longevity or competence as a teacher. In an attempt to combat a perceived crisis of teacher mediocrity, many American states opted for an additional feature: a standardized entry-to-the-profession test of all graduating teacher candidates (Brookhart & Loadman, 1992; Childs, Ross & Jaciw, 2002; Dybdahl, Shaw & Edwards, 1997). Many of these same states began to look seriously at a second remedy: a structured orientation to the environment and profession of teaching. ‘Sink or swim’ seemed increasingly inadequate as a launching strategy for beginning teachers’ careers (Holloway, 2001; Huling-Austin, 1990; Robbins, 1999; Smith, 2002).

In this paper we will investigate how one Canadian province, Ontario, has in recent years moved from ‘Plan A’, the standardized entry-to-the-profession test, to ‘Plan B’, a structured professional initiation program, in an attempt to address the same issues facing their American counterparts: declining teacher morale and effectiveness, coupled with eroding public confidence. We will begin the discussion with a brief historical narrative that provides a necessary context for Ontario’s policy shift from entry-level teacher testing to a teacher induction program. This will be followed by the presentation of some key criteria for successful teacher orientation, derived from the growing body of literature in this field, leading into an analysis of two case studies: a low-budget teacher induction program in New Brunswick, and a high-budget one in California. Recognizing that in a democracy political validity, in the form of general public acceptance, is as important as program validity for the long-term success of educational reform, we then move to an analysis of the provincial government’s implementation strategy, with a focus on both forms of validity. Finally, we offer some preliminary conclusions that not only address the particular program in Ontario, still a work in progress, but also suggest some general prerequisites for success to anyone interested in designing a new-teacher induction program.

The Ontario Educational Context

Informally, at the board and school level, Ontario educators had begun to move in the direction of purposeful support for new teachers by the late 1980s. Cole and Watson (1993) documented this trend in their overview article describing the ebb and flow of program initiatives designed to ease the transition of new teachers into the profession. Based on a province-wide study conducted in 1991, they found that 81 per cent of the province's school systems were providing at least some formal induction, and that 62 per cent went beyond initial orientation to include some combination of mentoring with an experienced partner, or workshop activities specifically geared to teachers in their first or second year. Yet, in spite of this encouraging progress, the authors of the study could not hide their pessimism. "School systems and faculties of education are awaiting direction in the form of induction policy and guidelines from the province's Ministry of Education," they noted, "... but see no guidance forthcoming" (p. 251). Funding was tight, and the focus of reform had shifted to curriculum initiatives. Furthermore, they detected no real appetite for significant collaboration between the major potential stakeholders in a teacher induction program: school boards, faculties of education, teacher federations, and the provincial ministry. Rather, each institution seemed to be guarding its own turf, and viewing the others with suspicion.

These fears proved to be realistic. Beginning with the 'Social Contract' cutbacks associated with the New Democratic Party's (NDP) final two years of office, and continuing through the first four years of the Progressive Conservative government led by Premier Mike Harris, funding for education was repeatedly slashed. All programs deemed non-essential, or beyond the classroom, sustained deep cuts. New teacher induction was one of the casualties. By 2003, a survey conducted by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) of teacher education graduates from 2001 and 2002 revealed major gaps in the way beginning teachers were inducted into their profession (OCT, 2003, May). Eighteen per cent of the responding first-year teachers indicated they had received no orientation from their board. Less than one-fifth of first- and second-year teachers were placed in a formal mentoring program, and of these, only half rated

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the experience as satisfactory. Twenty per cent of the beginning teachers reported no meaningful

board-level in-service training. Although the novice teachers commended the informal support they received from individual colleagues and school administrators, the fact remained that over seventy per cent of the first-year respondents reported high or somewhat high stress levels. In its report, the College of Teachers cited data from the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan which revealed that between 20 and 30 per cent of new plan members had dropped out of teaching in the publicly-funded system within the first three years. Clearly, the momentum behind structured induction programs had dissipated, and new teacher retention was again a serious problem.

The first major public document to tout the benefits of a formalized orientation program in Ontario for beginning teachers was issued by the province's College of Teachers in April, 2000. The Harris government had won re-election in 1999 partly on the strength of a pledge to require all teachers to submit to periodic tests of their knowledge and skills. Once re-confirmed in office the Minister of Education, Janet Ecker, had requested advice from the fledgling OCT on how to administer such a program. Lost amidst the more controversial aspects of their report, which recommended formal testing for entry-level teachers, coupled with a portfolio approach to ongoing professional development by their more experienced colleagues, was Recommendation 4. It advocated "that employers be required to provide a two-year induction program, the core components of which would be defined by the College, to beginning teachers employed on a regular basis to ensure that they continue to develop and to refine the knowledge and skills required by members of the teaching profession" (OCT, 2000, April, p. 124). The onus for implementation and ongoing administration of such a program was placed on the school boards, as employers of new teachers, but of course there were significant funding implications that would necessitate a commitment from the provincial government.

Ecker included the novice-teacher induction idea as part of the Ontario Teacher Testing Program which she announced on May 11, 2000. After listing programs that would become the hotly contentious Professional Learning Program (PLP) for experienced teachers, and Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test (OTQT) for beginners, the Minister went on to describe "an induction program, similar to an internship, that will help new teachers develop good classroom

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management and teaching skills, through coaching and support from more experienced

colleagues.” (Ecker, 2000, May 10, para. 9). The promised induction program continued, on paper, to be an important part of the Progressive Conservative government’s teacher testing policy, and was listed in a subsequent Ministry brochure as a second phase that would be developed in 2002. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2002). That promise was not kept, however, and when the new Liberal government took office in the Fall of 2003, its main dilemma with regard to new-teacher development was what to do with the OTQT.

Gerard Kennedy, the incoming Minister of Education, moved quickly to terminate the controversial Professional Learning Program, with its mandated professional development for experienced teachers. However, he initially seemed to favour retention of the Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test, and graduating teacher candidates were again required to pass the standardized assessment in order to be certified in 2004. In May of that year, the Minister met with the Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OADE) to enlist their support for a revised OTQT format to begin in 2005. In followup correspondence, the Acting Chair of OADE summarized the Minister’s proposal as follows:

You proposed to us that it would be possible for the legislated requirement for an ‘entry to the profession test’ to be met by an assessment scheme developed by the Faculties. This scheme would be of sufficient rigour to assure the people of Ontario that new teachers have the background needed for embarking on their careers. You also indicated that the assessment scheme should have common elements but that it could also recognize the distinctiveness of individual programs offered at Faculties across Ontario. You were open to alternative approaches to the delivery and timing of the assessment scheme (Allen T. Pearson to Honourable Gerard Kennedy, correspondence, June 18, 2004, p. 1).

The Deans declined Kennedy’s request, but did offer to allow a periodic program assessment by a qualified third party, to verify that existing courses in each Faculty of Education covered appropriately the legal and ethical requirements for teachers in Ontario. They rightly noted that, while this initiative would ensure that students graduating from Ontario B.Ed. programs would be properly qualified in a particular area of professional knowledge, it would not address the

Kennedy and his advisors continued to mull over the possibilities. A discussion paper on the Education Ministry's website stated that "having an entry test to teaching is consistent with our approach of treating teachers as responsible professionals"(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004, August, p. 5). The discussion paper went on to propose that "a revitalized College of Teachers could work collaboratively with the faculties of education" to redesign and administer such a test, which would ensure a core of common learning. Potentially, the paper added, the entry test "could be moved to after the end of the first practice or 'induction' year" (p. 5). Later that year, in an open letter to the teacher candidate class of 2005, Kennedy (2004) gave as the ministry's view "that the OTQT should be replaced with a better assessment mechanism that is relevant, convenient, and evaluates teaching skills and know-how in a meaningful way" (para. 4). The letter also noted that the government was "exploring an induction program for first-year teachers," as well as "some form of assessment to be done at the end of the first year of teaching" (para. 5).

The Ontario College of Teachers welcomed the Minister's vague reference to an induction program for beginning teachers. Building upon the results of its annual survey of new teachers, the OCT had been publicly pushing for a two-year program of new teacher induction since 2003. Beginning with a White Paper issued in April of that year, followed by a series of structured consultations, the College had presented the new Minister of Education with a final report in the Fall of 2003 entitled "New Teacher Induction: Growing Into the Profession"(OCT. 2003, December a). In the Foreword of that document the College Registrar, W. Douglas Wilson, noted that "in 2002, fewer than 20 per cent of Ontario's new teachers had mentors. Fewer than half our new members were satisfied with their orientation and induction"(p. 2). Asserting that the quality of teaching was the largest single variable in student learning, Wilson described a continuum of teacher preparation. "We view the early years" he stated, "particularly the first two of our members' teaching careers as a continuation of the learning process that begins in faculty of education classrooms, continues with practice teaching and intensifies as

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new teachers learn on the job” (p. 3). The OCT Report recommended that the provincial
government require all

school boards to implement a two-year induction program for new teachers. This induction program would be linked to the College’s own professional and ethical standards, and include a structured orientation to the school and board where the new teacher would be working. Other mandatory elements would include a mentoring program in which volunteer experienced teachers were teamed up with each novice pedagogue, as well as professional learning opportunities for new teachers and mentors alike. Both mentors and novices would receive paid release time from regular classroom duties, to enable them to take part in mentoring and professional development. The College’s Report estimated the cost would be \$4,000 per new teacher over two years, and assuming 10,000 newly-hired teachers per year, this would total \$40,000,000, once the two-year program was up and running. Among the core goals were the following: to improve teaching practice, and thus student learning; to retain new teachers, and integrate them into their school’s culture; to provide professional development opportunities; to contribute to a collaborative school environment; and finally, “to demonstrate to the public that new teachers have the skills and support they need to be effective teachers” (p. 7). The centrepiece of the recommended program, according to the OCT e-mail newsletter, was mentorships. “The involvement of a mentor is the most powerful and cost-effective intervention in an induction program” (OCT, 2003, December b, para. 6).

The Education Minister’s thinking on the orientation and assessment of new teachers continued to evolve. In a March, 2005 letter to all Ontario-based teacher candidates, Kennedy stated that the Ministry was “now moving to the design stage of an induction year for new teachers that could involve mentoring, increased professional development opportunities and other resources to supplement pre-service training” (Kennedy, 2005, March 24, p. 1). The Minister had not yet given up on a test, however, noting that some form of assessment might be done at the end of the first year of teaching. This hesitation by the Minister attracted the attention of the province’s teacher federations. Under the heading “Teacher testing rears its ugly head again”(OSSTF, 2005, March 30, p. 1), the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation

Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, Issue #60, March 11, 2007. © by CJEAP and the author(s). (OSSTF) drew its members' attention to the fact that the entry-to-the-profession test had not been scrapped, as was the hated Professional Learning Program (PLP), but rather was simply being

moved to the end of the first year of teaching. Citing several academic studies that criticized American teacher tests, the OSSTF urged its membership to "fight this new scheme" (p. 2). For a government publicly committed to mutual respect, dialogue and consensus among the various education stakeholders, such a blunt declaration of intent was bound to draw attention. A working-table panel on teacher development was established to make recommendations on new teacher induction. Its report, issued in June of 2005, advocated the establishment of a mandatory Beginning Teacher Development program, to include orientation to the school board and school, professional development targeted to the needs of new teachers, a supportive mentoring program, and due attention to the teaching load and resources given to new teachers. In addition, it recommended that school principals be required to assess new teachers twice in their first year, in a modified version of the Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) system already in place in Ontario. Successful completion of both the induction program and the performance appraisal would effectively replace the previous requirement of passing the OTQT test (Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, 2005, Fall; Wilson, 2005, September).

The "New Teacher Induction Program" (NTIP) was announced by the Minister with appropriate media fanfare on October 4, 2005. It followed the recommendations of the Teacher Development Working Table fairly closely, though the press release backgrounder cited research on similar programs from around the world, as well as feedback from 21 experimental demonstration projects conducted by school boards within the province. The key elements in the mandatory program to be administered at the board and school level were: orientation, mentoring, on-the-job training, and two evaluations of each new teacher by the school principal. Unlike the OCT design, then, but similar to the Working Table recommendation, training and support of new teachers would be combined with performance assessment in *one* program. The provincial government promised \$15 million in new funding per year to finance the program, noting that cancellation of "the ineffective pen and paper Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test" would free up about half the required amount (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005, October 4).

Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, Issue #60, March 11, 2007. © by CJEAP and the author(s). It was a far cry from the \$40 million advocated by the OCT Report of 2003, however.

Initial responses to NTIP were favourable. “The idea to replace the Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test with an induction program that includes mentoring, increased professional development opportunities and other resources to supplement pre-service training for first year teachers is a good one,” said the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA) in their newsletter (OECTA, 2005, p. 8). Similarly, “OSSTF welcomes teacher induction program” was the headline on that organization's on-line media announcement. (OSSTF, 2005, October 4, p. 1). Even the College of Teachers chose to view the cup as half full, and not half empty, stating in its professional journal that the government's plan echoed College advice, and that at last, “Ontario's newest full-time teachers will get the initial on-the-job support they need and crave” (OCT, 2005, December, p. 12).

The 2005-06 Program Guideline was not issued until March 3, 2006. It retroactively authorized school boards to begin implementing those aspects of NTIP which did not require legislative approval, in particular orientation of beginners to the school and school board, special professional development opportunities for new teachers, and the establishment of mentoring relationships linking beginning teachers with experienced colleagues. Receipt of the promised provincial funding support was tied to a reporting and accountability process focussed on the school boards. For 2005-06, fully participating boards could expect to receive a \$5000 base amount, plus approximately \$1200-\$1400 per new teacher (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, March). Once approved by the legislature, the requirement of satisfactory ratings on two performance appraisals by the school principal would be added to the program. In the meantime, the provisions of the existing teacher appraisal system continued in effect (de Korte, 2006, May 17). In September, the Ministry of Education's Director of Teaching Policy and Standards sent to each school board by electronic attachment resource handbooks for use by principals, mentors and new teachers. A covering memo noted that these resources “were created in response to board requests for assistance, and are optional” (Anthony, 2006, September 14, para. 3). In addition, the memo stated that one “courtesy, hard copy” (para. 4) would be sent to the NTIP contact person at each school board. Clearly, the administrative implementation was proceeding

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cautiously, mindful of local sensibilities.

The New Teacher Induction Program did not emerge full-blown from a master plan, but evolved from a combination of political and programmatic needs. At this point, a number of critical questions emerge. Does the one-year \$15 million program match up to the two-year \$40 million program foreseen by the Ontario College of Teachers? Will NTIP be able to deliver quality programming in the key areas of new-teacher orientation, professional development and mentoring? Is it a good idea to link training and support with evaluation in one program? Will the consensus of stakeholders in support of the program hold, once full implementation begins? To answer these questions, it is useful to consult a growing body of literature on both new-teacher induction and mentoring.

Theoretical Research Perspectives

Numerous conference papers and journal articles in the United States over the past two decades attest to the rise in importance of teacher induction and mentoring within the educational research community there (Andrews & Martin, 2003; Halford, 1998; Huling & Resta, 2001). In a chapter prepared for the prestigious *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (Houston, W. R., Haberman, M. & Sikula, J., 1990), Huling-Austin set out five basic goals that have typically been included in the many teacher induction programs springing up across America. These were: (1) to improve teaching performance; (2) to increase the retention of promising beginning teachers; (3) to promote the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers; (4) to satisfy mandated state or district requirements; and (5) to transmit the culture of the educational system to beginning teachers (1990). This list of goals continues to find a place in most educators' rationales for intentional new teacher induction. In particular, programs designed to ease the transition of novices to the profession have been touted for their potential to reduce the rate of teacher dropouts. Qualitative testimonials to the benefits of induction programs in holding on to promising new teachers abound, but convincing empirical studies have been rather less plentiful. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) have produced the most compelling evidence, based on a critical review of ten existing empirical studies on induction programs. While noting that the

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impact of the various induction programs differed significantly among the 10 studies reviewed, these authors concluded that “collectively the studies do provide empirical support for the claim that assistance for new teachers and, in particular, mentoring programs have a positive impact on teachers and their retention” (p.1).

In more recent years, a number of scholars have attempted to raise the bar of expectations. While granting the existence of an emerging consensus among U. S. educators and policymakers that the retention of new teachers can be assisted by effective induction programs, Feiman-Nemser (2003) is critical of most such initiatives because they focus on short-term support designed to help new teachers survive their first year on the job. “Keeping new teachers in teaching is not the same as helping them become good teachers,” she has stated. “To accomplish the latter,” she believes that “we must treat the first years of teaching as a phase in learning to teach and surround new teachers with a professional culture that supports teacher learning”(p. 25). Similarly, Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) have asserted that the mentoring of new teachers will not reach its potential unless it is guided by a deeper vision of “transforming the teaching profession itself” (p. 50). No longer do models of the autonomous professional, or even the collegial professional, suffice. Teachers must be prepared for the postmodern world of fluid institutional roles, diverse communities and expanding networks of professional learning. With this in mind, successful induction and mentoring programs must be designed “so that they are explicitly seen as instruments of school reculturing” (p. 54).

Moir and Gless (2001) have challenged the designers and implementers of teacher induction programs to look beyond teacher retention to the classroom itself. If done properly, they maintain, induction experiences can both re-orient the teaching profession and help future students be more successful. Moreover, it can build bridges of cooperation by linking university-based teacher preparation with in-service professional learning. Quality induction, however, requires a new set of consciously formulated and clearly articulated professional expectations. Moir and Gless have established five essential components of such an induction program for beginning teachers. The first of these is program vision: “a clear vision of how quality induction can help create a new kind of professionalism among all teachers” (para. 9). It must go far

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beyond mere survival in the demanding world of today's schools. Otherwise, the induction program runs the risk of perpetuating the traditional norms of isolation, low expectations and

ineffectiveness. The second required component, for Moir and Gless, is institutional commitment and support. Teacher learning must be made an administrative priority. This institutional resolve can be shown "by designing programs that ensure adequate time and resources for new teacher learning and mentor development, by establishing policies that protect new teachers during the critical stage of induction, and by making teacher development the centerpiece of educational reform" (para. 11).

The third element of Moir and Gless's model is quality mentoring. This, they see as the most important piece of the puzzle, making it critical "that we think not only about what a new teacher needs to be successful but also what a mentor teacher needs to know and be able to do in order to support a new teacher" (para. 16). Effective mentoring must not be limited to occasional coaching, and hand-holding in times of stress, important as these can be in a particular time and space. The induction program must be focused on the novice teacher's classroom practice. This factor leads directly to Moir and Gless's fourth essential component, professional standards. Thus, "the language and concepts of good teaching must be embedded and modelled throughout the professional environment" (para. 17). For maximum learning, then, the period of induction must extend for two to three years, and it must balance and blend a standardized professional vision with the complexities of a diverse society. Finally, the induction program must focus on classroom-based teacher learning. The beginning teacher must have time for, and encouragement to, become involved in observation, collaborative lesson design, model teaching, reflection, analysis of student work, goal-setting, and assessment against professional standards. This should involve support and critical dialogue, not just with an experienced mentor, but also with other beginning teachers. Effective induction programs, this author team asserts, "help new teachers become on-the-job learners, who are constantly questioning and systematically inquiring into their classroom practice with a focus on student learning" (para. 21). If the five key components come together in a high-quality induction program, Moir and Gless believe it can be a "catalyst for changing school cultures and improving the teaching profession" (para. 25).

Embedded in the exhortations of most academic experts - including Moir and Gless, and Hargreaves and Fullan - is the explicit assumption that a successful new teacher induction

program is built around a structured mentoring relationship which brings each novice teacher into frequent contact with an experienced colleague. Informal mentoring of new teaching staff by veterans working alongside them has a long history, but formal programs that establish a one-to-one connection marked by specific expectations and allocated resources are relatively new in North America, dating mostly from the early 1980s. The term itself has much earlier roots, however. Some three thousand years ago, according to ancient Greek mythology, the great Odysseus assigned responsibility for the education of his son Telemachus to a trusted friend and advisor named Mentor (Janas, 1996). Traditionally, the mentoring relationship has been seen as hierarchical, with a subordinate beginner assigned to take advice, and receive support, from a veteran supervisor. Recent thinking points to the reciprocal benefits of a more equal relationship, where mentor and mentee are encouraged to learn together, and from each other. When seen as a two-way learning and teaching process, it becomes a relationship of mutual benefit (Salinitri, 2005). According to Danielson, teachers at all levels of experience “grow professionally when they seek out peers for professional dialogue and turn to each other for constructive feedback, affirmation, and support” (2002, para. 5). If this assertion is true, what better place to begin to embed it into the professional culture of teaching than in the initial mentoring relationship associated with teacher induction?

By the mid-1990s, Dagenais (n.d.) had isolated and labelled five key dimensions of a successful teacher-mentoring program, namely: program scope, mentoring incentives, mentor training, mentor selection and matching, and assessment and evaluation of the mentoring experience. Building upon this beginning conceptualization, but then going beyond it, Hargreaves and Fullan (1999) envisioned four forces for change that would require a new approach to mentoring in the postmodern age. The first of these was a more equal mentor-mentee relationship. In a world characterized by the spread of new information technologies, and with school systems forced to adapt to the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds and presenting a range of learning challenges, there is even less reason to assume the old ways

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are the best ways. "These times call for less hierarchical mentor relationships", the authors have asserted, going on to state that "the mentor relationship should not be the only helping relationship in a

school" (p. 20). Veterans and novices alike will need help, often from each other. The second key cited by Hargreaves and Fullan was a continuing emphasis on emotional support. Again, while the beginning teacher is more apt to need this kind of help, there may well be times when experienced veterans also need to express feelings and vent frustrations within a safe, professional relationship. Mentorship, these authors have underlined, "involves more than guiding protégés through learning standards and skill sets" (p. 21). The third change force they identified was the impact that trends toward school accountability, parental choice and cultural diversity were having in the direction of greater connection with the wider community. In this emerging society "teachers are not always the experts" (p. 21), they have noted. And finally, Hargreaves and Fullan highlighted the changing demographics of the teaching profession. After two decades of relatively light hiring, the first years of the new century are witnessing a massive changeover of teachers. The challenge here will involve "harnessing the energies that new teachers bring to the system without marginalizing the perspectives and wisdom of teachers whose knowledge and experience have deep roots in the past" (p. 21). The end result could be a creative community of teacher-learners, but it could also be a balkanized staffroom, where older and younger teachers live and work in separate, even antagonistic worlds.

The implications of these change forces, according to Hargreaves and Fullan (1999), are threefold. First, mentoring relationships must be explicitly conceptualized and designed to serve as "instruments of school reculturing" (p. 23). Second, mentoring programs must be linked to other reform measures with the overt intention of "transforming the teaching profession" (p. 23). Teacher education, induction and ongoing professional development would become a seamless whole. Finally, the time to act is now, given the window of opportunity afforded by the wholesale changeover of teaching personnel. The large cohort of beginning teachers can be shaped into a catalyst for positive change, or allowed to become a reactionary bulwark of the status quo. The ultimate goal, in the view of Hargreaves and Fullan, should be "to incorporate

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mentoring as part and parcel of transforming teaching into a true learning profession” (p. 23).

Hargreaves and Fullan have articulated the grand macro-vision for mentoring. By contrast, Feiman-Nemser (2001) has shone a spotlight on the other end of the spectrum, focusing on the impact that a single exemplary mentor in one school system could have. She developed the term “educative mentoring” (p. 17) to describe the approach of this model support teacher (Pete Frazer) whom she studied in depth over many months. The first significant element seemed to be the way this mentor defined his role. “Adopting the stance of cothinker rather than expert,” Feiman-Nemser explained, “Frazer tried to balance his desire to share what he knows about good teaching with his concern with helping novices figure out what works for them as they construct their own professional practice and identity” (p. 20). Working indirectly, but not passively, this exemplary mentor sought to assist his novice partner to identify and describe clearly the nature of problems that cropped up. “By working to pinpoint problems,” Feiman-Nemser pointed out, “beginning teachers practice talking about teaching in precise, analytic ways. This is a critical tool in joint problem solving and continuous improvement” (p. 22). Frazer frequently complimented his mentees, but in a particular way which he called “noticing signs of growth” (p. 23). Rather than general praise for doing a good job, he tried to provide targeted feedback for specific accomplishments. In the words of Feiman-Nemser, “this practice fit with his view of learning as a process of development” (p. 23). Frazer did not rely solely upon his many years of teaching experience and acquired practical wisdom, but neither did he simply parrot the latest theories. “He believed that teachers need a deep understanding of how children learn, enriched by theoretical knowledge and informed by firsthand experience” (p. 24). He tried to role model this balance of knowledge and experience in his own actions, adding to them a healthy dose of curiosity, what he called “wondering about teaching” (p. 25). Lest we might conclude that the secret to superior mentoring is simply to identify superior mentors, Feiman-Nemser pointed out that this exemplar “worked in an induction program that provided support teachers with the same kind of backing and guidance offered to novice teachers” (p. 26). The macro and the micro levels, then, must be in harmony to produce ‘educative mentoring’ on a consistent basis.

A Sample of Induction Programs in Practice

While many American states have instituted formal induction programs for new teachers, they are proportionately less common in Canada. One province which does have a well-

established program to help novice instructors is New Brunswick. Their “Beginning Teacher Induction Program” (BTIP) was established in 1995 (Gill, 2004). In 2003-2004 there were 278 beginning teachers in 131 schools from all nine Anglophone school districts who took part. Funding was provided by the provincial Department of Education (\$500.00 per mentor-mentee pair) and the New Brunswick Teachers’ Association (NBTA) (approximately \$120.00 per pair). Each school district held an orientation workshop for beginning teachers, a training workshop for mentors and a closing celebration event. Additional meetings varied from district to district. As well, the NBTA held a province-wide introductory workshop for beginning teachers and a province-wide workshop on supporting beginning teachers that was specifically geared for school principals. Most principals reported their main involvement with the program consisted of matching mentors and beginning teachers at the school level, providing orientation to the school, and monitoring the progress of beginning teachers.

Through a survey conducted at the end of the 2003-04 program, one hundred percent of principals and district coordinators, ninety-nine percent of mentors and ninety-three percent of beginning teachers indicated their support for the continuation of BTIP (Gill, 2004). As described in the final report based on this survey, “beginning teachers identified having a mentor and being able to visit other schools and classrooms as beneficial. Mentors felt they had benefited from the program by helping new teachers find their feet in the profession, sharing knowledge and expertise, learning new teaching strategies and techniques and having time for reflection on their own teaching” (p. 3). Among the recommendations in the report, designed to improve the induction program, were these: (1) consider making the program available to long-term supply teachers; (2) extend the program for more than one year; (3) strengthen mentor training; (4) consider providing additional finances; and (5) ensure that all beginning teachers are placed in the best assignment possible, with adequate teaching resources, and not too many supervision duties. Beginning teachers in general asked for more observation from their mentors

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- not surprising since 40 percent of them reported receiving no in-class observation from a mentor. Yet the pool of experienced teachers, from which mentors might be drawn, will be declining due to projected retirements. At the same time, principals and district supervisors reported increasing

workloads which made it difficult to direct sufficient attention to their roles in the BTIP. While everyone involved in the program agreed it was very worthwhile, still it was clear that a shortage of time and funds was threatening to curtail its impact.

Across the continent in California, one of the earliest and most successful teacher induction programs has been the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project. Begun in 1988, it had by 2003 served over 9,000 beginning teachers. So successful has it been that many other school districts across the United States have adopted it as their program model. The New Teacher Project is built around an extensively-structured mentoring process (Moir and Bloom, 2003).

Mentors work with individual novices for one to two hours every week and offer a seminar to their group of approximately 15 novices once a month. Mentors observe instruction, provide feedback, demonstrate teaching methods, assist with lesson plans, and help analyze student work and achievement data. This intensive support is possible only because participating school districts release veteran teachers to serve as full-time mentors for two or three years each (para. 4).

One key to the success of the program is the rigorous process followed to select mentors. Applicants must present clear evidence of outstanding teaching experience, top-notch interpersonal skills, exceptional knowledge of subject matter, and success working with culturally diverse students. A second key to success is the extensive training in which the selected mentor applicants must participate. Topics include identifying new teachers' needs, selecting appropriate support strategies, utilizing observation skills, and the application of peer coaching methods. A weekly half-day mentor forum then provides them with ongoing professional development, and participation in a community of learners with whom they share strategies, concerns and successes. Mirroring the behaviour expected of novice teachers, the mentors set goals, conduct periodic reviews of progress, and revise their practices based upon

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this reflective assessment. At the end of their three-year terms as mentors, these educators return to their school systems, although many of them have become administrative or curriculum leaders within their school districts. If teacher development is the key to student success, then this program, while considerably more costly than the low-key New Brunswick initiative, appears

to focus successfully on the crucial element of new teacher induction: high-quality mentoring.

Meshing with Ontario's Political Environment

While methodological considerations of program design and cost-effectiveness are important, ultimately the decision to implement a new educational policy in a representative democracy is a political one. On the one hand, there are partisan considerations to weigh - will the proposed program please more of the electorate than it offends? Does it spike the guns of opposition parties, or provide them with new ammunition to attack the Government? On the other hand, how will this new reform be received by those influential interest groups who traditionally follow developments in the field of education? Will it enlist their support, thus smoothing the way for implementation, or provoke their antagonism, thereby endangering the ultimate success of the policy initiative? The area of teacher development, and specifically new teacher induction, is no exception to the rule. As important as program validity in the final equation is the question of political validity (Miles & Lee, 2002). Will the proposed change attract general support from the voting public, and at the very least, avoid alienating powerful groups with a particular interest in the topic? Governments ignore this question at their peril.

Given this background, one cannot help but notice a sharp contrast in political style between the current Liberal government in Ontario, led by Premier Dalton McGuinty, and its predecessor. Under the leadership of Premier Mike Harris, the Progressive Conservative (PC) government did not shrink from confrontation with major interest groups in its determination to implement policy changes. For example their teacher testing policy, first announced in the thick of the 1999 provincial election campaign, was designed as much for its popular appeal with PC-leaning voters as it was to bring a visible form of public accountability to the teacher development process (Glassford, 2005). The PC cabinet knew that the policy would provoke

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outright hostility from the organized teachers, but went ahead anyway, confident that the measure would gain them even more support, elsewhere amongst the electorate. This calculation proved accurate, at least for a time. The Harris-led Conservatives won the 1999 election with a clear majority, and proceeded to pass legislation that created the Professional Learning Program (PLP) of mandatory recertification for experienced teachers, and the Ontario Teachers Qualifying Test

(OTQT) for novices. However, the concerted opposition of the teacher federations hampered the smooth implementation of the PLP, and called into question the advisability of the OTQT. Four years later, at the next provincial election, the PC party was defeated by the opposition Liberals, who received strong support from these same teacher unions. Shortly after the Conservative defeat, the PLP was unceremoniously axed, followed a year later by the less dramatic demise of the OTQT. The only substantive aspect of the Harris government's teacher testing policy that remains in place is a province-wide system of standardized teacher performance appraisal (TPA), conducted on a periodic basis with all practicing teachers by their school principals.

The newly elected Liberal government, with Gerard Kennedy as Premier McGuinty's choice to serve as Minister of Education, moved quickly to replace the openly confrontational approach typical of the latter-day PCs with a consultative and consensual style that hearkened back to the premierships of John Robarts (1961-71), Bill Davis (1971-85), and David Peterson (1985-90). At the macro level these three leaders - the first two Progressive Conservatives, and the latter a Liberal - sought to position their governments near the middle of the spectrum, with broad appeal to most segments of the population. At the micro level, and with specific regard to education policy, they consulted broadly with all significant interest groups in the field. Public policy in education between 1961 and 1990 frequently resulted from ongoing dialogue and specific consultations involving Ministry of Education bureaucrats, representatives of the various educational interest groups - teachers, boards, parent groups - and other individual experts from the universities and the media. While sharply divisive issues could arise - the province-wide one-day teacher walkout in 1975 over collective bargaining rights, and the acrimonious controversy over full public funding of Catholic high schools in the mid-1980s are two examples - these were

Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, Issue #60, March 11, 2007. © by CJEAP and the author(s). not allowed to poison the general atmosphere of discussion, consultation and basic trust. The Canadian political scientist, Pross (1992), has termed this approach to governance the policy community model, and historically it has been the norm in Ontario.

Traditionally in parliamentary systems, new governments use the highly symbolic Speech from the Throne as a means to establish an overall tone for their term of office. The McGuinty Liberals were no exception, choosing to stress excellence in education as one of their themes.

Alongside this broad generality, they were careful to stress the need to bring stability and peace to the public education system, and to treat educators with due respect (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003, November). The Minister made use of the close ties he had forged as Opposition critic with the teacher federations and parent groups who were opposed to the PC education policies, in order to establish a pattern of direct communication and frequent consultation. An Education Partnership Table, consisting of representatives of the major interest groups, was established to investigate key areas of concern. Mini-discussion papers on topics such as continuing professional development were mounted on the Ministry website, with an invitation for public feedback (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004). Ministry officials fanned out across the province to the usual meetings with Board officials, teachers, faculty of education professors and teacher candidates, carrying a new message of dialogue, partnership and common interests. The most egregious PC policy in the eyes of the organized teachers, the hated PLP, was quickly terminated. As the Liberal government pursued its goal of excellence in education, it was careful to include all the major stakeholders in consultations leading up to the formulation and announcement of new policies. While differences of opinion remained on some key issues - province-wide literacy and numeracy testing, for example, and reform of the Ontario College of Teachers, to name two - there can be no doubt that the general atmosphere surrounding educational policy-making and implementation in the province changed dramatically. Stability and peace do seem to have returned to Ontario's public education system. Indeed, on May 29, 2006 the newly-appointed Education Minister, Sandra Pupatello, lauded the creation of a new Student Success Commission, "which puts teachers' federations, school boards and the government on the same side of the table to reach consensus on how to improve our education

Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, Issue #60, March 11, 2007. © by CJEAP and the author(s). system.” (Ont. MOE, 2006, May 29, para. 2).

The clear commitment of the Liberal government to the re-creation of an era of good feelings within the Ontario educational policy community has provided the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) with a fair degree of political validity. Certainly, it has been launched amidst general commendation from the major stakeholders. Nevertheless, there are subtle differences of opinion emanating from two of the larger teacher unions that will bear watching.

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) welcomed the replacement of the old entry-to-the profession test with an induction program for new teachers. Nevertheless, it expressed certain misgivings in its newsletter to members (OECTA, 2005, November).

The new induction program links mentoring, professional development and Teacher Performance Appraisal, and requires that a teacher's successful participation in all three be reported to the Ontario College of Teachers and recorded on the teacher's certificate of qualification. OECTA is opposed to a mentoring program that is mandatory, evaluative or tied to professional certification (para. 2).

The same article voiced doubts about the adequacy of funding earmarked for the professional development and release time needed to make NTIP work effectively. Similarly, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) characterized the creation of NTIP as a good news item, but it decried the “lack of governmental clarity, detail and direction” as far as province-wide implementation (OSSTF, 2006, February 15, p. 10). Their criticism had merit - Minister Kennedy did not announce until October a program starting retroactively six weeks earlier, in late August. Furthermore, the nuts-and-bolts details were not published till the following March, and enabling legislation for significant parts of the program were not approved till June (Ont. MOE, 2006, June 2). Subsequent resources and guidelines issued by the Ministry were labelled as non-prescriptive (Anthony, 2006, September 14). Their voluntary nature constituted a collaborative gesture toward the Boards, perhaps, but others might view such local autonomy as a further blow to program cohesion. Nonetheless, though two of the influential teacher unions have voiced misgivings about details of the policy and its implementation, the

Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, Issue #60, March 11, 2007. © by CJEAP and the author(s). important thing to note is that their critiques were offered in an overall context of civilized dialogue. Gone are the confrontational threats and divisive tactics of the previous era (1995 - 2003). Within a general atmosphere of support and approval for the new teacher induction program, a few minor caveats have been raised. Unlike with the Conservatives' teacher testing policy, no major interest groups were determined to bring it down, right off the bat.

A Preliminary Assessment of NTIP

Will the New Teacher Induction Program, as presently constituted, stand the test of time? While it is always tricky to try to assess a work in progress, one way to proceed is to identify the provincial government's own goals for the program, and then project the likelihood of them being met, based on evidence derived from the growing body of academic literature, as well as analyses of actual programs that are up and running, elsewhere. The news release which accompanied Kennedy's formal announcement of the program in October, 2005, stated that NTIP would "better prepare and retain new teachers in the classroom and help boost student achievement" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005, October 4, para.1). It quoted the Minister as acknowledging that Ontario's current pre-service teacher preparation was shorter than in most other jurisdictions. "This program will complement their formal one-year training with another full year of on-the-job training, mentoring and assessment" (para. 2). This theme was repeated in a Program Guideline issued by the Ministry of Education (MOE) several months later (Ontario MOE, 2006, March). After declaring that NTIP was the second step in a continuum of professional development for teachers, the document promised "another full year of professional support, thus accelerating the learning curve, so that by the end of their first year of teaching, new teachers will have the requisite skills and knowledge to allow them to achieve success as an experienced teacher" (p. 3). The Ministry further projected that NTIP would "encourage a more collaborative and professional environment in Ontario's schools" (p. 3), and be an important factor in achieving its vision of "high levels of student achievement and greater public confidence in the education system" (p. 3). Lofty goals, indeed.

The list of specific outcomes which the Ministry expects new teachers to achieve as a

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result of successfully completing the New Teacher Induction Program is rather more modest.

First, they are to demonstrate competency in such areas of teaching as the equitable and respectful treatment of all students, knowledge of the curriculum, and classroom management strategies. Achievement of this goal will be measured by passing a teacher performance appraisal (TPA) conducted by the school principal through at least two classroom visits. Second, the novice teachers are to acquire an orientation to the Ontario curriculum, as well as to the specific board and school where they have been hired. This will be covered through attendance at school and board-based workshops, mainly held prior to the school year. Third, the new teachers are to receive professional development and training in such areas as literacy and numeracy, identifying at-risk students, dealing with bullying situations, assessment and evaluation, communication with parents, and teaching diverse learners. This is to be accomplished through attendance at workshops and training sessions designed to broad provincial specifications, but delivered locally. The fourth goal is to improve skills and confidence through participation in a mentoring relationship, while the final, rather redundant, outcome on the list is to have demonstrated a proven record of “successful teaching in an Ontario publicly funded school board” (Ontario MOE, 2006, March, p. 4).

How likely are these more modest outcomes to be met? The Ministry is letting a lot ride on the first outcome: proven competence as demonstrated by a stamp of approval from the principal through the teacher performance appraisal process. Here at last is a fleshing out of that vaguely-worded promise of an assessment at the end of the first year of teaching, first mentioned by Kennedy when the Liberals were considering scrapping the OTQT. Yet, there may be a price to pay in lost overall effectiveness, if the same principal who is expected to be a source of support to new teachers is also the person who can end their careers. It will be interesting to see how many beginning teachers have their careers terminated through the TPA. In the short run, success in the orientation and professional development outcomes will be measured by attendance at, and participation in, the prescribed workshops and training sessions. Presumably, these events will help the new teacher to better demonstrate the acquisition of those TPA competencies being evaluated by the principal. Similarly, one can observe and record certain

Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, Issue #60, March 11, 2007. © by CJEAP and the author(s). visible aspects of a novice's participation in a mentoring relationship. However, measuring the acquisition of skills and confidence is going to be largely an act of faith. In other words, if you set it up, they will participate, but to what degree will they benefit? As Hotspur points out in Henry IV, Part 1, upon hearing Glendower's boast that he can call up fairy spirits from the depths: "Why, so can I, or so can any man; But will they come when you do call them?" (Bevington, 1987, p. 210). The degree of benefit will be hard to determine, although the

requirement that mentors and mentees jointly develop an Individual NTIP Strategy is a gesture in the direction of accountability. Interestingly, though, at the end of the process it is the principal who will co-sign the one-page Individual NTIP Strategy form with the new teacher, not the mentor (Ontario MOE, 2006, March, Appendix B). One is left with the nagging feeling that the program is labelled *induction*, but at the end of the day it is in reality *evaluation* - and potentially high stakes evaluation, if principals choose to exercise their full authority under the TPA system.

While orientation sessions and professional development workshops can make a valuable contribution to the induction of beginning teachers, there is general agreement that the centrepiece of such a program is the mentoring relationship. How well does NTIP stack up here, as currently envisioned in the Program Guideline? The short answer is that it seems deeply flawed. In the first place, mentoring is to be unpaid and largely unrewarded, and yet school principals are charged with recruiting and selecting suitable mentors from volunteer teachers. These experienced teaching professionals are merely expected to be excellent role models, life-long learners, effective communicators, knowledgeable of curriculum, and skilled in teaching and learning strategies suitable for both adults and students. According to the Program Guideline, the mentoring program is to be organized and systematic, yet also differentiated, and involve a training component to turn the veteran volunteers into genuine mentors. Again, much of the responsibility for ensuring a successful launch seems to fall to the overworked principal, who is expected to orchestrate, and yet not dominate, the matching process between eager recruits and willing veterans (Ontario MOE, 2006, March, pp. 12-13).

It seems appropriate at this point to consider funding. The NTIP Program Guideline for 2005-06 promised each school board a base grant of \$5000, plus "approximately \$1200-1400 per

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new teacher” (Ontario MOE, 2006, March, p. 17). This figure doubles the amount provided for each beginning teacher in New Brunswick’s induction program. However, it is barely one third of the amount called for in the Ontario College of Teachers’ 2003 induction blueprint for a two-year program (OCT, 2003). Furthermore, critical recommendations based on participant feedback in New Brunswick in 2004 called for additional finances, an extended program beyond one year, and the inclusion of long-term supply teachers (Gill, 2004), a high-needs group of classroom

instructors also missed by Ontario’s NTIP as currently constituted. Most of the funds will be eaten up by orientation sessions and prescribed workshops, leaving little money for more than token class release for mentors and novices. It seems clear the \$15 million per year, while a nice round sum in the abstract, is nowhere near sufficient to ensure that, to quote the Guideline itself, after one year of NTIP, “new teachers will have the requisite skills and knowledge to allow them to achieve success as an experienced teacher,” (Ontario MOE, 2006, March, p. 3).

What about the more expansive goals proclaimed by the Minister of Education when he announced the creation of the New Teacher Induction Program, early in October, 2005? First, will it better prepare and retain new teachers? The answer to this question appears to be yes, though there are qualifiers. Simply put, the bar has been set so low in Ontario for the past 15 years when it comes to new teacher induction that any semblance of an organized initiative from the Ministry, especially if accompanied by a few dollars in funding, is bound to look good by comparison, at least at the outset. The gap between pre-service training and in-service professional learning has now been addressed, albeit in a modest way. As for teacher retention, the statistics on dropouts from the profession were never as grim in Ontario as those reported south of the Canadian border. The OCT’s 2005 State of the Profession survey, for example, painted a picture of general satisfaction by the province’s teachers, accompanied by the usual suggestions for further improvements (Jamieson, 2005, September). Ironically, the Liberal government’s success in bringing peace and stability to the education system, largely through negotiated multi-year labour contracts, but also due to their more consultative style, seems to have reduced the need for making teacher retention a top priority.

Kennedy's second claim, that NTIP would boost student achievement, is much more problematic, because the connection is so indirect. The assumption appears to be this: the implementation of NTIP will better prepare new teachers to teach, and since better teachers produce more effective learning experiences, therefore it follows that a successful teacher induction program will ultimately boost student performance. Intuitively, the logic seems sound, and yet there is a dearth of evidence to prove the conclusion. We might more productively ask this question: is NTIP as good as it could be? Here, the answer is clearly no. The limited training

process is not going to turn out many "educative mentors" of the kind described by Feiman-Nemser (2001). Nor will the add-on nature of the mentoring role for veteran Ontario teachers, already busy with other things, produce many exemplary administrative or curriculum leaders of the sort described by Moir and Bloom (2003). Moreover, a study by the Ontario College of Teachers revealed that, in 2005-06, fully 59 percent of new teachers were hired after school began in September, thus causing them to miss out on significant aspects of the structured orientation (McIntyre & Jamieson, 2006, December). It seems highly unlikely, then, that the current NTIP is going to lead to the cultural transformation of the Ontario teaching profession, as envisioned by Hargreaves and Fullan (1999 and 2000).

If we compare Ontario's NTIP with the five essential elements of a successful teacher induction program identified by Moir and Gless (2001), the two areas where the greatest deficiencies are evident are in institutional commitment and quality mentoring. The program has a vision, it can tap into the professional standards developed by the Ontario College of Teachers, and it is focused on classroom based teacher learning. However, without a much stronger commitment from the provincial level, as expressed in funding priorities and bureaucratic attention by the Ministry of Education, the program will accomplish little. In particular, school boards need to be empowered and encouraged to set up meaningful, high-quality mentoring programs. This will entail the expenditure of two or three times the current allocation, but such expenditures would actually merit the commonly-used euphemism of 'investment.' Improperly-trained mentors, haphazardly recruited and hurriedly matched with anxious and overwhelmed novice teachers, simply will not achieve the desired outcomes.

Kennedy's third enunciated goal for NTIP was that it would result in greater public confidence in the school system. Here, the symbolism is important. While retaining the support of the teacher federations, the government has institutionalized a form of new teacher assessment, through the mandatory performance appraisals conducted by the school principal. Over the years, polling data has tended to show that Ontarians favour the testing of teachers, but are opposed to public confrontations between their government and these same teachers. Through a patient and conciliatory style, and by combining orientation, training and mentoring elements

with a more authentic form of performance evaluation, the current provincial government was able to achieve what its predecessor could not: a workable means of assessing newly-hired teachers. This may well result in greater public confidence, at least initially.

The actual achievements of Ontario's New Teacher Induction Program, to date, are modest but not insignificant. Given the virtual disappearance of meaningful board- and school-level orientation programs by 2000, in an era of dramatic funding cutbacks, the reappearance of intentional programming for beginning teachers is a welcome development. Moreover, the tangible evidence of a provincial commitment to new teacher induction, as evidenced by a funded program supported by bureaucratic personnel and policy guidelines, offers some assurance that the initiative is more than a passing fad tied to the unusually high levels of replacement hiring at the turn of the new millennium. Within the overall budgetary priorities of modern governments, new funds are hard to come by. Viewed in that light, the \$15 million allocated for NTIP marks a significant first step. Given the current government's commitment to the consensual policy-community model of governance, it will be up to interested stakeholders such as teacher federations and parent groups to apply pressure upon the Ministry, but also at the political level of cabinet and caucus, to gradually increase financial and administrative support for the initiative. High-quality mentoring within a properly-funded and permanent new-teacher induction program does offer the promise of more effective teaching and higher levels of student achievement. Ontario's NTIP policy is not all the way there yet. Other jurisdictions, contemplating the allocation of scarce funds to new-teacher induction, need to be aware of the

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potential costs, but also the higher payoffs in program effectiveness, from a full-blown teacher
mentoring initiative.

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