



Note-taking guide for panel discussion

Panelist: Melissa Braaten

Your current work and how it relates to new teachers, and a quick anecdote about the importance of induction from your own past.

I'm a secondary science teacher prep. I study how student teachers learn. Followed first cohort five years, plus a dozen more cohorts. What happens when teaching assignment changes, other things that happen in career. We were sure they'd prepared amazing science teachers in methods. We'd collected data! Then observed and saw it was not true. Seems crazy now to think preparation for teaching happens in college.

From your perspective, what is the most important support element that's essential to beginning teacher success?

Joint work (community or practice). Teachers experience vast growth when working together. Joint work is hard—there's a period of dissent in creating a goal. But when working together toward a goal, that's where professional learning takes off.

As you consider your current role, are there missing resources, personnel or structures necessary to a successful induction program that you would consider especially useful? If so, what are those?

Re: MMSD...a single mentor or induction activity can't be everything to a beginning teacher. It's like secondary teachers in subject-specific issues—a regular mentor may not be able to help. There's not enough players on the bench.

What effective communication structures have you seen that connect members of an induction system? (pre-service instructors, mentors, beginning teachers, principals, program leaders, other supports like instructional coaches, other stakeholders like district leadership, school board members, professional organizations)

How messages move through communities? Not the message but an object or a person; someone who has membership in more than one community. Like I am not a mentor but I am part of the mentor community. Tools and objects carry messages (called boundary objects). There's a chance it'll get reframed in the new community, but it leaves a trace. People in a brokering position. A study at Vanderbilt showed that math teachers and coaches become catalysts for change moving between research and teachers.

Are you aware of a highly successful induction program? If so, what attributes does it possess that make you think of it as successful?

Research doesn't allow me to see the whole success anymore! Programs have successful components. University of Washington provided subject matter specificity where it hadn't existed and saw massive growth. When that support ended, they saw erosion of their practice in the way they talked about teaching and learning.

Other thoughts (panelist)?

Tom: The "handoff"—is there a way for pre-service to communicate with mentors? Melissa: I have to physically cross, be the broker. Struggle is about not just science teaching, but student-oriented, inquiry oriented. Conflicted between new way of teaching science and fitting in with the school. Doing parallel projects with student teacher being placed with a teacher doing new teaching.

Parking lot for related questions

