REFERENCES & RESOURCES – TEACHER PREPARATION & EFFECTIVENESS

Teachers’ learning develops across a career and teacher leaders take on many roles as their career progresses.


Experience matters; teaching experience is associated with student achievement gains throughout a teacher’s career. As teachers gain experience at a particular grade level, their students are more likely to achieve academic success. Experienced teachers also benefit their peers and novice teachers.


The “induction” years of teaching (i.e., from the time a person decides to be a teacher until 2-3 years post-initial certification) provide an entre into the profession and can shape how teachers will engage students and whether they will stay in the profession. Well-constructed induction efforts are aligned with mentor training, offer time for new teachers to work with their mentors, and utilize mentor/mentee time to collaboratively analyze instructional practices.


The quality of teachers who enter into the profession is improving; however, too often, our most experienced and effective teachers leave the profession early, most often due to workplace conditions.


High teacher turnover especially harms student achievement in schools serving low-income communities (note that over 60% of Georgia’s public school students are considered to come from low income communities). Teacher turnover can be addressed through several policy levers: leadership development (e.g., organizational management, fairness, deliberate orchestration of distributed teacher leadership), learner-centered professional learning, and time for teachers to engage in collaborative professional learning. Differential pay has been studied and results vary as to whether this policy lever would be successful. Most recently studies suggest that differential pay can attract new teachers but may not keep good teachers.


doi:10.1177/0743558499143003


Exception: Henry, G. T., Bastian, K. C., & Fortner, K. C. (2011). Stayers and Leavers: Early-Career Teacher Effectiveness and Attrition, *Educational Researcher* 40(6), 271–80. This study, which did not apply teacher fixed effects, discusses an “emerging consensus” that “less effective teachers are more likely to exit the profession” and finds that less effective teachers exit after one year.

Successful learning opportunities for teachers involve at least 50-90 hours of direct interactions with teachers (rather than “train the trainer” models), follow up support, and school/local collaborations to plan, review local quantitative and qualitative data, and make decisions within the local environment. Teacher learning can result in assessment outcomes for students; however, confounding variables get in the way of formal evaluations (e.g., lack of randomized placement of students into classrooms, lack of control over out-of-school issues that affect student learning, competing local initiatives, teacher and leader attrition, etc.). Randomized-controlled studies are rare. Recent qualitative findings suggest that teacher learning is non-linear, entails complex sense-making; thus, a complex, ecological model (rather than a linear model of teacher learning) may be closer to reality.


Teachers know what's helpful and hurtful to their learning. They suggest professional learning that is
- Personalized to their needs
- Sustained over time
- Coordinated by someone (a peer) who knows their context well
- Collaborative (professional learning communities)
- Focused on students (rather than on compliance to rules, pre-set instructional sequences, or scripts)

partners take a closer look at a vexing problem. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(2), 168-183.


Digital tools can enhance teachers' professional learning opportunities, but they need to involve learning communities in addition to simply providing information/resources. Practice-based methods, such as peer analysis of videos of professional practice, can be an especially powerful tool for digitally enhanced professional learning.


Learning to teach literacy well involves understanding several key principles.

**Principle 1:** Learning to read and write occurs in societies that shape whether and how reading and writing will be valued. Social and cultural aspects of literacy shape how texts appear, what is learned with texts, and how learners approach literacy learning. There are many pathways to literacy development.


**Principle 2:** Understanding how literacy develops is essential to teaching literacy. This might include understanding elements such as:

- *Funds of knowledge* are the essential cultural elements Learning to teach literacy involves understanding that children and their families bring to a classroom that can provide interest, background knowledge, and motivation for learning;
- Reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing and representing overlap and are all vital to literacy development;
- Comprehension development is the ultimate goal of learning literacy. There are several contributing elements to comprehension (e.g., the contributions of background knowledge, language development, multi-modal nature of texts, transactional aspects of reading, vocabulary development, object of the event);
- Constrained (fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics) and unconstrained skill development (vocabulary, comprehension) are related to literacy development;
- Writing development is a non-linear process;
- Motivation, interest, and engagement are essential elements for literacy development;
- Diagnostic assessment practices are important for making instructional decisions;
- Digital literacies and the orchestration/composition of digital, multi-modal texts are especially important in today’s society to ensure that children learn how to participate in an increasingly digital society;
- Transference between first languages and English literacy (L1/L2 transfer) is helpful for literacy learning.
- Difficulties learning to read (sometimes called “dyslexia”) originate for many reasons and successful treatment/instruction will vary depending on the specific issues a learner presents.
✓ Literacy development is integrally related to “content literacies”; in other words, each academic discipline has specific requirements and demands that determine who might be deemed “literate”;


Principle 3: Effective reading instruction is shaped by principles of practice. There is no singular “best method” for teaching literacy.

- Praxis (reflection and action working together to shape instruction)
- Purpose (clarity about the expected outcomes for teaching)
- Serendipity (openness to chance and opportunities of the moment; no over-reliance on routine)
- Exploration (creative problem-solving)
- Reflection (follow-up analysis of experience, purpose, and outcomes)
- Community (engagement in learning communities of professional peers; giving back professionally and growing personally)
- Service (constant focus on serving children and their families)
- Flexibility (expect challenges and seek alternative approaches)
- Caring (caring relationships sit at the core of the learning transaction)
- Reward (valuing the spontaneity of the classroom, immediacy of the joy of learning, and autonomy of professional status).