

# Booklet 4: Implementing a New Teacher Induction Workshop



Ontario  
College of  
Teachers  
AND  
Brock University  
Learning from  
Experience:  
Supporting Beginning  
Teachers and Mentors

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## Ontario College of Teachers Brock University

This resource was developed through a collaborative research partnership between the Ontario College of Teachers and the Faculty of Education, Brock University.

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# Learning from Experience: Supporting Beginning Teachers and Mentors

## Booklet 4: Implementing a New Teacher Induction Workshop

### Commitment to Professional Learning

For educators, pedagogical knowledge and daily professional practice are inextricably bound. Our careers provide us with opportunities to grow in myriad ways. We may challenge ourselves to deepen our understanding of education theory and extend our knowledge of effective practice, or we may look for venues to refresh and build on the passion and commitment we express in our school communities on a daily basis.

The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* can function as catalysts in the process of enhancing practice. Teachers new to the profession with limited classroom experience may understand that the standards are principles that underpin teaching. Alternatively, experienced teachers may live out the standards but have little formal knowledge of the revised standards. However, whether ingenuer or seasoned professional, both share the lived understanding of what it means to be a teacher in Ontario.

The activities presented in this booklet invite educators to engage in a collaborative professional learning session. It is structured in steps that will initiate awareness, reflection and integration of the standards as a basis for a professional inquiry. Whether you use the process to target issues of bullying or develop a growth plan for a school learning community, the choice is up to you, as the facilitator, and the participants. Follow-up and assessment are essential to this process. A rationale for each part of the process is included.

## Integration of the Standards

Integration of the standards into educators' learning and professional practice is predicated on the following premises:

- A school community is a place of continual transformation, therefore, awareness of new developments in the profession is essential.
- Awareness and understanding of the ethical standards and standards of practice inform the practices of those in the teaching profession.
- Each school community addresses its needs in specific ways but within the unifying framework of the ethical standards and standards of practice.
- The ethical standards and standards of practice provide a basis for educators to develop leadership skills and greater self-knowledge across the continuum of their levels of responsibility, school districts, affiliations, faculty experience and collegial and classroom experiences.

### Step 1: Assessing Levels of Awareness

#### *Level of Awareness*

Prior to any professional learning activity, it is beneficial to assess the participants' level of awareness and understanding with respect to the standards. The following steps may help to determine this.

#### *Preparing to Facilitate an Induction Workshop*

The facilitator might reflect on the goals of the project and then consider:

- How will the project impact on and improve practice?
- What is the level of awareness of the ethical standards and standards of practice among participants?
- Are the new teachers aware of the standards?
- Have the mentors worked with the standards? Will it be necessary to refresh their knowledge of the standards?
- How are the standards reflected in the school communities of the beginning teachers and mentors?
- What are the needs of beginning teachers and mentor teachers in their learning communities with respect to the standards?
- What kinds of experiences are needed to establish an environment of safety and openness for the participants?
- How many sessions are required for this project?
- What else must be known before embarking on this project?
- Most importantly, what are the immediate and long-term goals of this project?

**Rationale:** In order to properly prepare and plan, it is helpful if the facilitator determines the level of awareness that the participants bring to the session.

### ***Beginning to Facilitate the Induction Workshop***

As the first session begins, a facilitator will want to become aware of the needs of the participants in order to integrate them into the session. However, beginning with a community builder (see Booklet 2: *Using the Case Method in Induction*, Appendix I) will help participants relax and get to know other participants in the assembled group. A community builder allows participants to pause and respond to one another's questions. Sample questions can be printed out beforehand. It is useful to devise questions that are related to teaching themes or the standards (What does *Care* look like in your classroom? When did you know you wanted to be a teacher?) The community builder provides a scaffold for participants to build their knowledge of one another. As they engage in dialogue that is meaningful to them, bit by bit they begin to build a community.

Following the community builder, the facilitator might ask the assembled group questions such as:

- What issues do teachers encounter in their first two years of teaching?
- What are the immediate and long-term goals of the assembled group?
- What would the participants like to achieve or learn by the conclusion of the workshop?

These questions and others like them might be asked and answered in small-group activities where participants enter into dialogues, record information and make lists to be shared later with the larger group. Alternatively, some questions might be provided to the participants prior to the first induction session. The facilitator should consider which questions are relevant to the group.

The list of issues encountered by beginning teachers will be used later in the process.

**Rationale:** This collaborative process reveals that new teachers do, in fact, encounter real and relevant issues that need to be addressed. By sharing their feelings and experiences, new teachers understand that they are not the only ones facing certain challenges. The facilitator is building support for new teachers.

## Step 2: Reflecting on Professional Practice

### *Accessing Prior Knowledge of the Ethical Standards and the Standards of Practice*

The following exercise could be completed separately with each set of standards or by combining the ethical standards and standards of practice.

### *The Ethical Standards and/or the Standards of Practice*

After engaging in a community builder the facilitator will ask:

- What does it mean to be an educator in Ontario?
- What values are important to you as an educator?
- What images are associated with effective educators?
- What images do you hold of yourself as an educator?
- How are these images congruent with images of educators reflected in the standards?

The facilitator asks participants to brainstorm in order to create a list of nouns and adjectives pinpointing what they believe to be core values of the teaching profession. The facilitator then distributes copies of the ethical standards and/or the standards of practice. The facilitator asks participants to discover how their present core values are reflected in the ethical standards and/or the standards of practice by comparing the list they have just created with the text of the standards.

The facilitator asks the participants to provide concrete examples from their own practice that illustrate phrases, words or ideas from the ethical standards or standards of practice. Participants share this information with the group.

Once the facilitator has ascertained that there is a correlation between the Ontario College of Teachers' standards and the participants' experiences in school communities, the next step is to encourage participants to discuss issues they have encountered as new teachers and listed earlier in the session.

At this point, participants will determine what direction is most useful for the group to take.

The facilitator asks:

- What insights can be gained from being aware of issues experienced by beginning teachers?
- How can knowledge of the standards help and support beginning teachers?
- How can you use this knowledge to enhance your practice?
- What is the goal of making these connections?

**Rationale:** What has likely occurred is a realization that the participants are already living the standards in concrete, practical and recognizable ways. The group has identified issues that beginning teachers encounter and the exercise has raised awareness of both the ethical standards and standards of practice.

### Step 3: Integrating the Standards into the Case Process

The facilitator presents The Sharing Circle, a case written by a new teacher (see *Booklet 2: Using the Case Method in Induction*). The participants read the case, noting pivotal moments or issues important to new teachers. Using a flip chart to record responses, the facilitator invites participants to:

- list the facts of the case
- identify the issues or dilemmas
- choose one issue on which they, as a group, would like to focus
- discuss the issue
- take a variety of viewpoints to explore the issue (the viewpoint of the new teacher, the principal, the mentor, the students and so on)
- consider how the issue might be addressed and the benefits or consequences of the action to be taken
- inquire into and propose answers to the question: What is this a case of?

This discussion may last for approximately an hour as participants work in separate groups or one large group as required.

The facilitator now asks the participants to revisit the ethical standards and standards of practice. The facilitator asks:

- Which standards are illuminated in The Sharing Circle?
- What examples of the standards can you identify, referring specifically to the case or even quoting from it?
- How might the standards have helped to remedy the issues and dilemmas or support the beginning teacher?
- Is there ever only one way to address a teacher's dilemma?
- What must a teacher consider before deciding on a course of action in response to any dilemma (context, other issues, needs of other students and so on)?

**Rationale:** The structured protocol of the case discussion approach supports the analysis of a real life teaching experience. As with any classroom dilemma, teachers must assess the facts before proceeding. By examining an issue from diverse perspectives, participants empathize with other stakeholders. Also, building consensus for one issue to be discussed encourages participants to reflect on all of the issues. Participants, in considering the ramifications of the proposed remedies, speculate on the benefits of each recommendation. They may also share approaches that have been effective in their own setting. The strategies they suggest offer ways to think about the case dilemmas, which could prove helpful should they later face similar dilemmas at their own schools. When participants map the case back to the standards, they can also see how the standards have been lived out in practice.

## Step 4: Professional Inquiry

The facilitator allows the participants to examine the issues as broadly as possible before reaching a consensus about next steps.

In the following steps, participants expand and reflect on the list of new-teacher issues they previously generated. The following questions may prove helpful:

- What issues do teachers new to the profession encounter?
- Have additional issues been identified in the case?
- Are there other issues for new teachers that should be added to the list?
- How can these issues be addressed?

The facilitator might offer prompts such as:

- What are the dimensions of this issue?
- What factors contribute to the issue?
- How is the issue related to the standards?

Participants might respond by:

- proposing explanations of the issues or alternative solutions
- suggesting actions to be taken that reflect the standards
- considering the benefits or drawbacks of proposed actions
- considering resources or community support.

Participants might decide to develop an action plan for their school to support new teachers in addressing specific needs. Some participants might decide that having new teachers write down their reflections or develop case studies that draw on their own dilemmas would be useful in instigating dialogue.

To support follow-up, the facilitator will ask the participants for their input on:

- follow-up meetings
- opportunities to network
- other initiatives or workshops to support induction.

### OR

The facilitator might continue with the case methodology process, asking the participants to write brief commentaries or reflections that speak to a dilemma in The Sharing Circle or in their own professional practice. Participants could decide to incorporate their own experiences into their commentaries. They might provide advice or reiterate components from the standards. This activity might form part of the session or an assignment to be shared at a subsequent meeting.

**Rationale:** These suggestions for deepening professional inquiry support the standard Ongoing Professional Learning as participants are encouraged to reflect on and further inquire into their professional practice. Rather than proposing an isolated moment of professional development, this session encourages deeper analysis and continued engagement with the standards. Facilitators may also create possible subsequent opportunities to extend the dialogues and professional conversations initiated in the session.



### Step 5: Assessing the Activities

In bringing the workshop to a conclusion, individual participants and the group as a whole are invited to evaluate the effectiveness of their work together. The following questions may prove helpful:

- Did knowledge of the standards influence the actions of the group? If so, how? If not, why not?
- What did you learn about new teachers?
- How effective has the workshop been in identifying and supporting new teachers and their issues?
- Has the workshop been of benefit to mentors? If so, how? If not, what needs to change?
- Are there ways for new teachers and mentors to form support networks?
- What did you learn about the standards?
- Does the group have a consensus about the meaning of the ethical standard of Care (for example) in the context of The Sharing Circle?
- What is the relationship between this workshop, teachers' professional practice and the standards?

To promote collaborative professional inquiry regarding the standards after the conclusion of the workshop, the group might also consider the following questions:

- How can the standards guide you or offer you a path of awareness?
- Is there a standard that you can live out and document, either personally or professionally, over the next week, month or year?
- What can you as an individual do to address or share your knowledge of the standards?

**Rationale:** Suggestions for further inquiry, dialogue and reflection are suggested. The aim here is to prolong attention to the standards and to encourage their habitual use in daily practice.

## Conclusion

Standards-based professional learning sessions provide a starting point to promote understanding of the standards and their integration into professional practice and, in this case, induction.

Along with these guidelines for facilitating a standards-based professional learning workshop, the Ontario College of Teachers is pleased to provide you with the *Standards in Practice* Resource Kit (2006), available on the College web site at [www.oct.ca](http://www.oct.ca) → Publications → College Documents. The *Living the Standards* Resource Kit (2008), a multimedia presentation, is currently in development.

These inquiry-based resources are teaching tools for you to share with colleagues or for your own professional learning and reflection.

If you should decide to plan a standards-based workshop for induction purposes, please contact Déirdre Smith at the Ontario College of Teachers or Lorenzo Cherubini at Brock University's Faculty of Education.

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