

Successful Practices for Planning, Implementing and Managing an Induction Program.

A clear set of goals, vision and values are needed as a foundation for an effective and sustained program. In this section successful practices relating to the year around program are listed.

- **Clear, accurate, professional and timely communications using utility software packages with distribution using traditional and electronic mail.** Communications need to originate from partners that have the greatest influence upon recipients. For example, use the State Department of Education letterhead when sending letters to school superintendents and principals for invitations to their instructors to attend induction events. Likewise, it is imperative that coordinators and program leaders provide communications well in advance of any activities or requests for information. Promotional materials need to be created and used to inform stakeholders and participants about the program activities and to register participants.
- **An enthusiastic and informed leadership team.** Team members must have answers, answers that initially come from program leaders.
- **Professional quality instructional materials for participants.** Budget wisely for, and produce quality instructional materials including handouts, powerpoint presentations, program binders, working materials, and email communications.
- **Systematic and well-designed data gathering plan for formative and summative evaluations and focused research efforts.** Produce valid and meaningful on-line, personal interview, and/or paper and pencil assessments that will strengthen the program as well as inform the participants. Participants must know the importance of their contributions of information for strengthening the current and future induction programming.
- **Regular meetings of program leaders to ensure quality programming.** Regular meetings are requisites for exciting and responsive programs. Program leaders and coordinators need to meet periodically for planning and production of meeting agendas, meeting reports, meeting content and evaluations; preparing budgets; making preparations for seminars and other activities; completing grant applications; making annual reports; and planning for presentation of program evaluation and research reports.
- **Attendance at professional development events.** Involvement with professional teacher organization officers as well as working with the entry-level teachers points to the importance of the induction program. Teacher organizations are often pleased to participate in seminars, and also provide food, lodging, meals, and scholarships when involved with induction program planning, promotion and recognition efforts.
- **Promotion of induction program at meetings with each of program partners.** Attendance at partner meetings and providing reports of program progress is essential.

Partners welcome requests for sharing information. Funders, for example, desire short reports about program progress and outcomes.

- **Review program goals, vision, and values annually or more often.** A collaborative induction program that involves many partners will evolve quickly with input from stakeholders and partners. Shared benefits, governance, and responsibilities lead to many ideas for improving the program.
- **Provide a private listserv to request and provide information for entry-level teachers and mentors.** Entry level teachers need their space for communicating with one another and their entire cohort. Private listservs -- that are free of interference from the faculty program leader -- are useful for providing meeting announcements, instructional materials, topic discussions to the the teachers.
- **If sufficient resources exist for proper management, provide a quality website for the program.** Allow considerable financial resources and time for someone to create, manage, and update a program specific website. A website is an efficient way to organize, distribute, and host a lot of induction information and communications. However, in addition to the cost, one must be sure to have an interested, knowledgeable, and skilled webmaster.
- **Regular attendance at conferences.** Induction programs have been established in large numbers throughout the world. In addition to providing for operation costs, policy-makers and administrators are now investing considerable resources to determine which aspects of the programming are most useful. Accordingly, researchers and program personnel are meeting at research and professional conferences to share new research findings as well as practices for streamlining and enhancing program activities. In addition, online special interest groups are meeting in-person and online to advance their knowledge. Keeping current and sharing information will ensure a vibrant and front edge induction program.
- **Resources to acquire literature from around the world.** Ideas gained from new textbook, audio, and video resources provide additional impetus for program improvement and redirection. Easily accessible and reasonably-priced resources are featured in the publications sections of many professional organizations, research groups, publishers, and journals who feature their programs on the internet.
- **Provide adequate time for program staff to complete their responsibilities.** Considerable time is needed to develop a sound infrastructure for a area-specific induction program. Insufficient time and ill-prepared and motivated, and compensated staff may jeopardize program success and sustainability. Faculty program leaders need to be afforded a minimum of 20% of their time if asked to manage a program. Coordinators may need up to 20 hours weekly to prepare, document, and create final reports for carefully planned program activities.

- **Design induction programming with measurable and reportable evaluation criteria.** Since policy-makers and funders require information concerning the effectiveness of the induction program, carefully plan program activities with reportable measures for on-going and end-of-program formative and summative evaluations. Be mindful at program planning time of the needs for evaluative information for stakeholders concerning program context, content, process, and outcomes.

- **Whenever possible, combine group induction seminars with other professional activities of the entry-level teachers.** Since student achievement is so closely tied with quality of instruction, school administrators carefully monitor the amount of time teachers are away from the classroom and laboratory. Consequently, in order to minimize absences during the regular school days, it is important to offer induction programming at professional teacher meetings, state-wide fall conferences, during weekends or evening gatherings.

- **Provide affordable graduate level course credit for the induction program.** Professional development activities are critical for assuring growth as a teaching professional throughout the teaching career. Early career teachers need ample opportunities to complete graduate course work that will meet masters graduate program requirements, and at the same time, lead to immediate improvements in compensation. Easy access to scholarships will minimize the financial stress and ensure greater numbers of entry-level teachers enrolling in accompanying graduate courses.

- **Use program area specific mentors to provide the support and assistance of the entry-level teachers.** When possible, use highly-regarded, recently retired, and properly trained teachers who taught agricultural education to serve as mentors. They can usually spend entire days observing the classroom and laboratory performance of the entry-level agricultural education teacher.

- **Select a higher proportion of early career teachers than highly acclaimed veteran teachers to serve as presenters for workshops and seminars.** Early career teachers usually connect better since they recently journeyed through their initial year(s) in teaching. Aware, yet, of the challenges, and initial joys of teaching, they are more apt to effectively address the concerns and questions of the new teachers.

- **Structure group meetings with ample opportunities and time for professional and social interaction among the entry-level teachers, program leaders, presenters, and state and university staff.** Scores of entry-level teachers have remarked about the value and need to talk with other entry-level teachers. Most teachers need this time to determine how they are progressing as a teacher as well to discuss ideas of how to be a more effective teacher and FFA advisor.