



## Educators' Perspectives on Teacher Retention and Revitalization

Alan J. Reiman  
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The Spring 2000 *Connections* newsletter addresses issues that came out of a recent U. S. Department of Education Conference in January, 2000. As well, it represents a commitment to teacher retention and revitalization that school systems and universities within our partnership share. These issues emphasize the ongoing need to ensure continuing professional development during college and early career years and for well-designed programs that support beginning teachers. Equally important to us all are strong, theory-research based professional development opportunities for experienced teachers to improve, grow, and remain energized.

Feedback from our last Network meeting indicated significant agreement about how beneficial it was to share ideas, successes, and concerns. Consequently, this newsletter issue has a new format that integrates the perspectives of representatives from each of our partners in the NC State/NC Central School- University Partnerships and Mentor Network. There was also a desire for a larger audience to hear the voices of our school/university partnerships. This newsletter builds on that essential component of meaningful and productive collaboration: communication and mutual respect for each other's ideas. There will be a discussion of school systems' views about teacher retention and preparing quality mentors. The issue will also include a report on the January, 2000 U.S. Department of Education conference and a summary of the current activities of the Triangle East Partnerships In Education and NC Central University's Professional Development School programs. Updated data on school systems' teacher and counselor educators' programs will be presented, as well.

### U.S. Department of Education National Conference on Teacher Quality

The U.S. Department of Education recognized N.C. State University's Model Clinical Teaching Program as one of the nation's leading models for support and professional development of new and experienced teachers and counselors. The model was presented by Alan Reiman, Doris Terry Williams, JoAnn Duncan Hines, and Sandy DeAngelis Peace at the Department of Education's National Conference on Teacher Quality in Washington, D.C. University provosts, chancellors, education deans, and school system superintendents were in attendance. The N.C. State Model Clinical Teaching Program session addressed the following topics: 1) building a theory and research-based program to address the needs of diverse learners and the needs of novice educators; 2) fashioning a curriculum and model for preparing school-based educators and mentors based in coaching and developmental principles; 3) rejuvenating experienced educators while supporting new teachers and counselors; 4) transforming school-university partnerships; 5) supporting interdisciplinary initiatives; and 6) summarizing research and evaluation outcomes related to educator learning and psychological

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**Network Partners:** Durham County, Edenton-Chowan, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank, Franklin County, Granville County, Johnston County, Lee County, Nash-Rocky Mount, Vance County, Wake County, Warren County, and Wilson County

**Triangle East Partners in Education:** Franklin County (Bunn and Cedar Creek Middle Schools), Johnston County (Smithfield Selma High School), North Carolina State University, and Wake County (Apex and Cary High Schools, and Martin Middle School)

#### North Carolina Central University, School of Education

**National and International Partners:** Associates at the Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands; Trevor Fullerton, University of Newcastle, Australia; George Lind, University of Constance, Germany; Philip Robinson, Roehampton Institute, England; Joseph Vaughan, United States Department of Education, retired; Association of Teacher Educators, National Commission on Clinical Sites; Massachusetts Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; Rhode Island Department of Public Instruction; Theo Bergen, University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands; Astrid Oien Halsnes, Teacher Academy, Bergen, Norway; Asbjorn Simonnes, Volda University, Volda, Norway; Nodie Oja, University of New Hampshire



development.

Participants attending the session were most impressed with the model's features:

- Explicit program commitment to adult learning and development principles (and to promote more competent, caring, and ethical teachers)
- Learner-centered mentor curriculum
- Commitment to research and assessment
- A coherent scope and sequence in our mentor curriculum
- A common language for teachers and teacher educators
- Distinctive ways of preparing mentors and school-based teacher educators who are sensitive to the needs of students, novice teachers, experienced teachers

We now turn to the voices of educators within our extended professional development network.

## **Educators' Perspectives on Retention and Revitalization: Linking Practice and Research**

Wendy was excited when she accepted her first teaching position in biological sciences at James Madison High School. She had completed a rigorous teacher education program that included an entire year of field experience. As well, she had a highly skilled cooperating teacher who gradually turned over responsibilities to Wendy while striving to provide ample support, guided reflection, and coaching. Wendy had prepared a teaching portfolio during her student teaching experience that demonstrated competence in many of the new Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards (INTASC) that have been widely adopted in the United States.

However, Wendy was not prepared for the first week of class. She had four different class preparations for five different classes. Further, two of her classes included students who had experienced chronic absenteeism and behavior problems in the prior year. Wendy also learned that she would have to teach from a cart because there were not enough classrooms to go around. On the positive side, the principal did express a commitment to supporting Wendy, and she was promptly assigned a friendly, caring mentor who helped her plan the first week of lessons.

But nothing could have prepared Wendy for the challenge of preparing so many different lessons for both motivated and unmotivated students. After the first month of teaching, Wendy began to question her decision to become a teacher. She was frustrated, overwhelmed, and disillusioned. But Wendy made it through her first year of teaching thanks to her supportive mentor, a supportive spouse, and a principal who altered Wendy's spring assignment so that it was less challenging.

Wendy's experiences are not unique in our nation. When comparisons are made with other professions (Gonzales & Sosa, 1993), some observers suggest that education is the "profession that eats its young." Consider then, that over two million new K-12 teachers will need to be hired in the next decade (Darling-Hammond, 1997). This large influx of new teachers will be challenged to educate diverse learners in an increasingly knowledge-based, technology-oriented society, with the concomitant challenges of urban and rural settings.

Fortunately, numerous studies have begun to document the value of formalized and intensive teacher induction programs (Gold, 1996). School systems represented in this newslet-



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ter are part of a first-wave of sustained efforts to foster more deliberative support and professional development programs for beginners and experienced educators. Some of the school systems have been refining their support programs for beginning educators for over 15 years. Listen to their concerns and commitments.

*“An issue facing Johnston County is the fact that, in some schools, there are not enough experienced teachers to mentor all the beginners. Some mentors are assigned to three or four novices — not the best situation for either the mentor or the novice....But we are addressing this issue and others by advocating for mentors and their mentees. Principals are encouraged to free up time for the mentors to observe, demonstrate, and assist their mentees”* (Robin Little, Johnston County).

Research suggests that successful support for beginning educators is dependent upon the quality of training afforded to the mentor (Ganser, 1996). But research also shows that the optimal arrangement is one mentor assigned to one beginning educator. As well, research suggests that beginning teachers who are carefully mentored using coaching and adult learning and development principles are more effective teachers in their early years, since they learn through coaching and guided analysis and reflection, rather than by trial-and-error (Feiman-Nemser, 1996). But there are new pressures for school systems. Judy Lassiter, coordinator of mentoring programs for Wake County Public Schools, adds another concern.

*“Our area of greatest concern for beginning teachers and mentors alike is the Performance-Based Product: what is required, how should it be composed, what happens if it is not accepted, and what help is available? To address some of these concerns, Wake County is offering mentor update training that focuses on encouraging reflection linked to the INTASC standards”* (Judy Lassiter, Wake County).

As mentioned earlier, school programs in more rural areas experience unique and difficult problems. They have a difficult time recruiting new teachers.

*“We have such a large turnover of teachers every year that we have very few veteran teachers that are interested in becoming a mentor....As well, too many of our mentors are serving 2 or 3 novice teachers. We also have a hard time recruiting new teachers because Northeastern North Carolina is very rural and we have to compete with the urban and suburban areas....However, Northampton will be initiating a new program to strengthen our commitment to employee support and special benefits”* (Susie Strickland, Northampton County Schools).

When we don't ease the way into the schools, it is a signal about how we feel as a profession. Unfortunately, school systems must attempt to balance the need for support of beginning educators with many other compelling school system pressures.

*“Perhaps the most pressing issue in Granville's ILP program is the need to balance novice educators' needs for a quality mentor with the many compelling demands that compete for the time of veteran educators who might serve as mentors”* (Paul Keene, Granville County).

However, benefits of formalized support programs for new educators include not only reduced attrition rates among new teachers, but also improved teaching competencies in both the beginning teachers and the experienced teachers who learn how to coach and mentor according to the needs of their proteges (Thies-Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1987). This finding is



most important in light of recent concerns about how best to relight the fire of experienced teachers who are beginning to burn-out. A mentor teacher relates.

*“Over the course of the fall semester, I have modeled new lesson plans, listened as my mentee has shared her frustrations and disappointments, encouraged her to analyze her teaching and reflect on it, and hopefully fostered new learning and development. What surprised me was how this mentoring revitalized me as a professional. It made me a better person and a better teacher (mentor, Wake County).”*

Mentored novice teachers tend to focus on students learning sooner (Gold, 1996), tend to develop greater flexibility in problem solving and ethical perspective-taking (Reiman & Watson, 1999), and leave teaching at a lower rate (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996). But how are mentors supported?

*“We are working to address the stresses beginning educators feel. In addition to a very deliberative support program for beginning teachers, all mentors are linked as a strong collegial group focused on guiding the learning and development of their novice teachers” (Lou Coggins, Lee County).*

*“We have hired a full time ILT Coordinator, included an extra mentor training session, and continued to support beginning teacher monthly support groups” (Joyce Harris, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Public Schools).*

Clearly the schools are developing quite complex systems of support for their new and experienced educators. In the near future, we can anticipate hearing about the effects of performance-based licensing standards and processes on beginning teachers. As well, we will learn how new school-university partnerships such as those being initiated at N.C. State University and at North Carolina Central University contribute to beginning educators’ commitment to teaching and to the profession. Hopefully, we also will have an opportunity to see beginning teachers learn, develop, and continue the cycle of support when they choose to become mentors.

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## NC Central University-School Partnerships

Sharon Spencer  
Doris Terry Williams

Many exciting things are happening at NC Central's two Professional Development Schools, C.C Spaulding Biosphere Magnet and Pearsontown Year-Round Elementary Schools. Fourteen teachers at the two PDS sites participated in a four-day Cooperating Teacher Institute, based on the NC State Model Clinical Teaching Program's mentor training curriculum, in the Fall. This means that we now have 25 teachers with at least a four-day condensed version of the Model Clinical Teaching Program's curriculum at the two PDS sites including 10 teachers who have the full mentor training and 15 teachers who have the 4-day training. One special educator and one physical education teacher participated along with the classroom teachers. Additionally, the 2-course Mentor training and practicum sequence is incorporated into the new Masters Advanced Competency programs in Elementary and Middle Grades Education. We think that Teachers As Leaders I (the mentor training course) and Teachers As Leaders II (the practicum) are appropriate titles for this professional training program. Several of the 4-day institute participants want to take the full 2-course sequence now.

We continue to have strong support at the school level, placing 4 interns at the smaller of the two schools and 10 interns at the larger one. University faculty liaisons, Sharon Spencer and Sheila Belfon, spend 2 days a week at the PDS site to which they are assigned. School-based liaisons continue to run the site-based seminars at each school. According to the school-based liaisons at each school and feedback from the interns, these small group seminars are working out nicely. There is a connection between the interns and their school-based seminar leader. Both groups come together once a month, sometimes twice, for a whole group seminar. When a school-based seminar leader has a conflict on a seminar date, the university seminar leader can step in, and vice-versa.

Student interns are being placed earlier in the semester prior to the internship. We expect to have the year-long internship fully in place for the Fall 2000-Spring 2001 school year. With the Fall 2000 interns in the school this spring, along with the Spring 2000 interns, there are 8 pre-interns and interns at C.C. Spaulding and 20 pre-interns and interns at Pearsontown. Interns lead intercession enrichment activities and Saturday Academy sessions at Pearsontown.

Additionally, pre-intern students have had opportunities to work with school-based educators in special classes. For example, elementary and middle grade education students have participated in learning activities conducted at one school site by the science lab teacher and the technology teacher. University faculty provide staff development opportunities at the sites, as well. For example, one faculty member conducted a half-day workshop for teaching assistants and interns on methods for teaching mathematics.

## School Systems' Outcome Evaluation Information

We now draw your attention to two tables that display important outcome evaluation information as another indicator of the commitment to educator retention and revitalization within our network school systems. Table 1, on page 6 presents the number of teacher mentors, school-based teacher educators and novice teachers.



Table 1  
N.C. State University Model Clinical Teaching Program  
Three-Year Trends - School-Based Teacher Educators

System	Year	Practicing Clinical Teachers <sup>1</sup>		School-Based Teacher Educators <sup>2</sup>		Beginning Teachers			Student Intern Teachers
		Total	In Course	Total	In Course	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	
Durham-	1997-98	175	12	5	—	175	155	—	215
	1998-99	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1999-00	—	—	—	—	266	200	158	150
Edenton-Chowan	1997-98	14	10	2	1	19	9	—	3
	1998-99	22	—	3	—	17	9	7	5
	1999-00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Elizabeth City-Pasquotank	1997-98	41	12	1	—	25	10	—	—
	1998-99	39	8	1	—	39	24	—	2
	1999-00	1	—	71	—	48	34	20	8
Franklin	1997-98	53	—	2	—	64	42	—	28
	1998-99	64	—	2	—	60	55	—	4
	1999-00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Granville	1997-98	47	6	2	—	41	48	—	—
	1998-99	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1999-00	75	12	1	—	42	37	24	—
Johnston	1997-98	133	—	4	1	133	87	—	38
	1998-99	175	—	5	—	150	100	85	23
	1999-00	287	—	6	—	162	118	89	10
Lee	1997-98	84	12	2	—	102	—	—	15
	1998-99	95	11	4	—	37	44	—	8
	1999-00	106	9	—	—	31	20	34	4
Nash-Rocky Mount	1997-98	162	25	9	—	124	60	—	31
	1998-99	193	20	8	—	115	83	40	87
	1999-00	240	—	9	—	115	79	54	35
Northampton	1997-98	43	7	—	—	53	18	—	6
	1998-99	50	12	—	—	36	28	6	5
	1999-00	30	—	—	—	48	—	—	6
Vance	1997-98	57	19	2	—	73	36	—	—
	1998-99	76	13	2	—	67	54	37	—
	1999-00	89	9	2	—	90	58	34	—
Wake	1997-98	300	71	11	3	389	195	—	390
	1998-99	485	71	12	1	535	333	—	317
	1999-00	796	—	18	—	355	250	250	355
Warren	1997-98	—	7	—	—	34	10	—	—
	1998-99	—	—	2	—	25	25	—	1
	1999-00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wilson	1997-98	26	10	8	—	64	57	—	44
	1998-99	36	9	8	—	79	42	51	40
	1999-00	41	—	8	—	63	65	36	43

1. Clinical teacher—a practicing teacher who takes on the additional responsibility of instructing and supervising prospective teachers (in pre-student-teaching experiences), student teachers, beginning teachers, and experienced teachers and has the following preparation: one semester (3–5 credits) of Introduction to Developmental Instructional Supervision, followed by a one-semester practicum (3–5 credits).

2. School-based teacher educator—a practicing teacher who takes on the additional responsibility of preparing clinical teachers in a school setting and also has participated in an internship as he or she works with prospective clinical teachers.



The trend shown in Table 1 toward increased numbers of mentors (practicing clinical teachers) is notable. This newsletter also includes new information about teacher peer coaching and mentor programs for counselors, psychologists, and social workers (see Table 2). This table represents the growth of the network's systematic and intensive staff development program for teachers and educators in other disciplines. Data from both tables reflect how the principles of adult development and coaching can be applied across educators' professional career span with the potential of creating professional development systems within schools.

Table 2  
N.C. State University Model Clinical Teaching Program  
School-Based Educators

	Teacher Peer Coaches	Peer Coach Educators	Counselor Mentors/ Supervisors*	Psychologist Mentors/ Supervisors*	Social Work Mentors/ Supervisors*	School Counselor Educators**	Beginning Counselors Psychologists, & Soc. Wrkrs.
<u>System</u>							
Durham	—	—	12	1	3	1	—
Johnston	497	1	8	1	2	2	8
Lee	—	—	2	3	1	—	—
Nash–Rocky Mt.	—	—	5	—	1	—	—
Northampton	86	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vance	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Wake	10	2	34	—	—	4	12

\* Counselor, psychologist, and social worker who completed the Differentiated Supervision of Counselor course, followed by the practicum.

\*\* Counselors preparing mentors.

## Triangle East Partners In Education

Julie Dwyer

All six of our partner schools in Franklin, Johnston, and Wake counties have in various ways made efforts to retain new teachers while revitalizing their veterans. In fact, among our partnership goals are several which speak directly to these two issues. We strive to “provide support for the induction of initially licensed teachers into the professional community,” as well as to “provide opportunities for the professional development” of both new and veteran teachers.

Cary High School continues to conduct a Beginning Teacher Institute for its new staff each year, utilizing the experience of its corps of mentor trained teachers. The institute involves intensive support during the week preceding the start of school followed by monthly seminars surrounding issues of interest to new teachers. In addition, all of our six partner schools now have new teacher committees whose role is to identify the needs of new staff and facilitate efforts in providing necessary resources.



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While providing support to new teachers is certainly a form of professional development for veteran teachers, our partners also look for ways to provide additional means for professional growth. In June, Cedar Creek Middle School in Franklin County will be hosting the faculty of its sister school, Bunn Middle, for an in-service tailored to areas of interest for both schools. A keynote speaker will be presenting information on middle school philosophy followed by mini-sessions as requested by both faculties. Smithfield-Selma High will be offering release time to nationally board certified teachers to assist those who are currently seeking board certification. Both Apex High and Martin Middle School, who are departmental partnerships in science and math/science respectively, are looking at ways to provide more technology training to their teachers. Both schools have received mini-grants which will provide the hardware, software, and training for teachers to use instructional technology in the classroom.

**Three new Clinical Fact Sheets are available through the Model Clinical Teaching Program at NC State:**

- # 4 - "The evolution of the social roletaking and guided reflection framework in teacher education: Recent theory and quantitative synthesis of research"
- #5 - "Promoting beginning teachers' equitable instruction: A developmental approach"
- #6 - "Peer coaching: Developmental approach to enhancing teacher thinking"

**Now available for distribution.** Each of our Clinical Fact Sheets is now available in packs of 100 for \$25.00/pack.



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