

Learning to teach:

**Examining beginning teachers' experiences
and learning within a multi-year,
standards-based induction
and mentoring program**

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Induction/Mentoring goals

Adjustment/Acclimation:

Social, emotional, cultural, technical support

Building Teacher Knowledge:

Developing knowledge of teaching – what teachers should know

Critical Reflection and Application:

Learning to apply knowledge and adjust teaching practice to increase and support student learning.

Supports teacher retention

Supports developing teacher knowledge

Supports developing teacher effectiveness

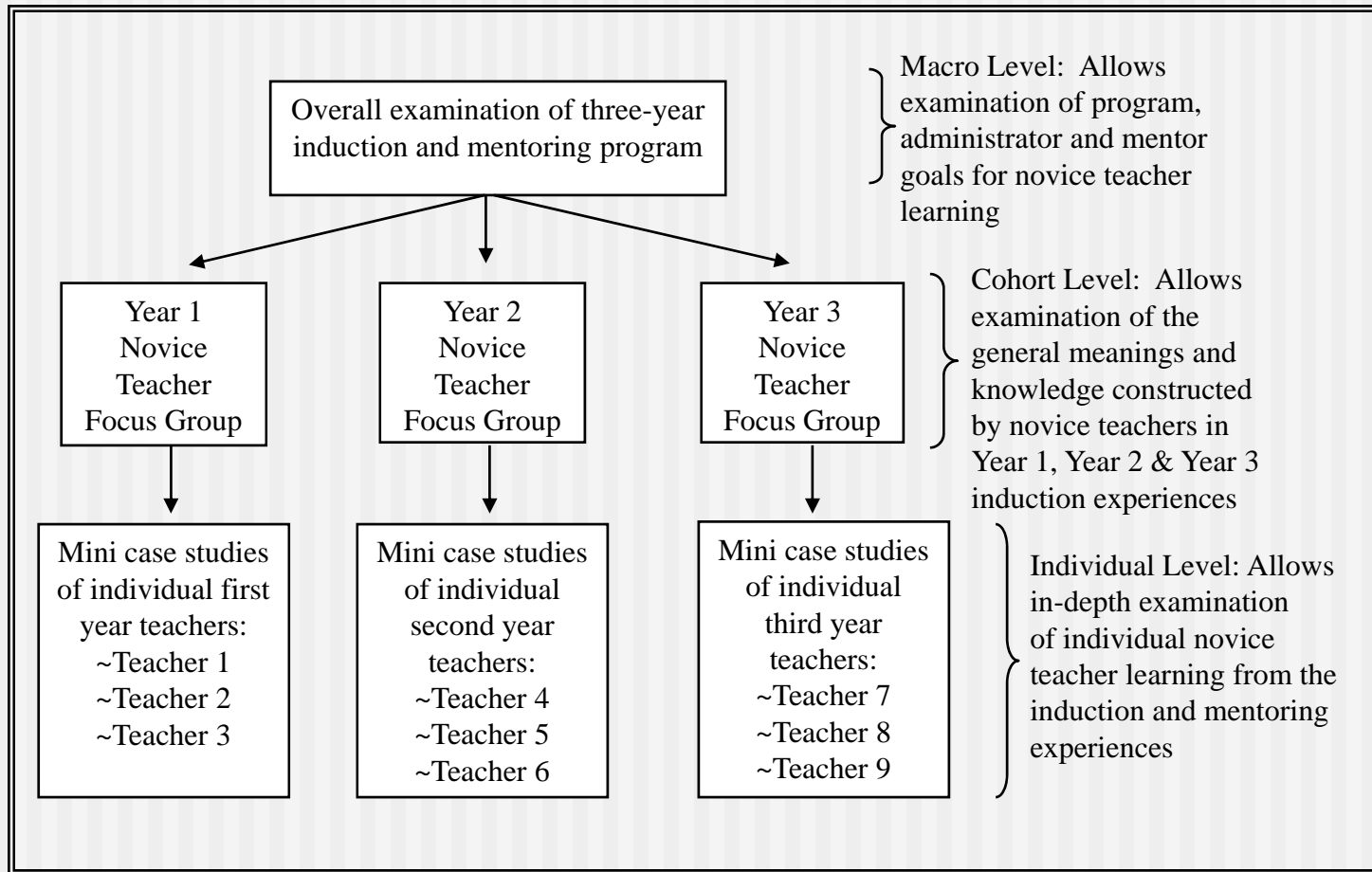
“Fairview Public School District”:

- Rapidly growing district with changing student demographics
- Member of DCNTP
- 3 year program
- Full-release mentors (1:15 ratio)
- Elementary program only

Research Questions:

1. What do first-, second-, and third-year teachers expect and want from a multi-year teacher mentoring and induction program?
2. What takes place during the mentoring and induction experience over the course of the academic year, and how are these experiences similar or different for first-, second- and third-year novice teachers?
3. What mentoring and induction activities or experiences do first-, second-, and third-year novice teachers value as particularly meaningful in constructing knowledge about teaching?
4. What do first-, second- and third-year novice teachers identify as the mentoring and induction program's impact on their practice as classroom teachers?
5. How does what first-, second-, and third-year novice teachers identify they have learned about teaching from the mentoring and induction experience compare to what mentors, administrators and the induction program identify as important for novice teachers to learn?

Research Design – Embedded or Layered Case Study



What beginning teachers valued

- The mentoring program
- The mentor on a personal level
- Affirmation of teacher's work
- Survival support, specific ideas and strategies, classroom management
- Y1: "here-and-now", getting the big picture
- Y2: PDP process; less "here-and-now"; desire for more targeted learning
- Y3: Desire for structured mentor support around instruction

Initial Educator Seminars:

- 1st year teachers found more value in seminars than 2nd or 3rd year teachers
- “Sparked thinking” but little classroom application
- Mentor scaffolding was needed to connect ideas to their own individual contexts and needs

What gets applied to classroom practice?

- Primarily “little things” (process of teaching)
 - classroom management
 - parent communication
 - lesson structure (agenda, grouping)
- Importance of “seeing it” within one’s own context to support application
- Reflecting AND Projecting led towards more outcome-focused (student learning oriented) application of teacher’s learning

A shift in teacher learning...

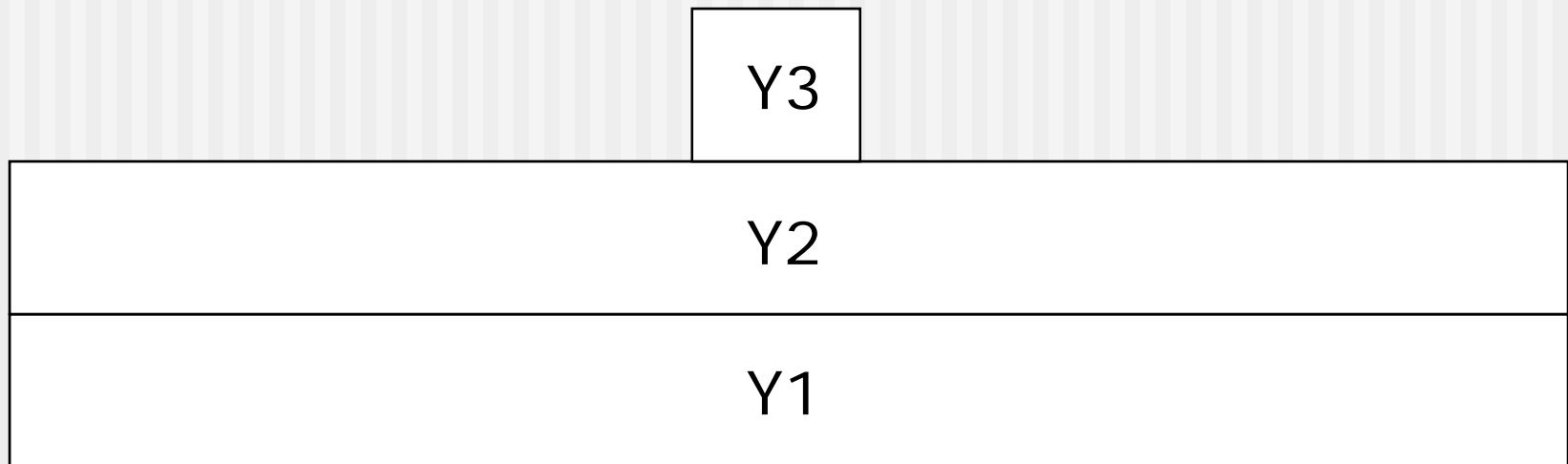
I see the mentoring program as the best professional development that you could ever do. And it's all about moving their practice forward. The discussions that take place need to focus on student learning: What do we want students to learn? How do we know they are learning it?

So that's our ultimate goal. Having them come to the realization, having them look at their own practice and make changes based on what they see. It won't be what am I doing, but what are the students learning and what do I need to do as a result of what they learning or not learning?

Once you can have teachers make that shift, education is totally changed, and that's what we're really excited about.

-Mentoring Program Director, Fairview Public Schools

Current Fairview Public Schools mentor program structure:

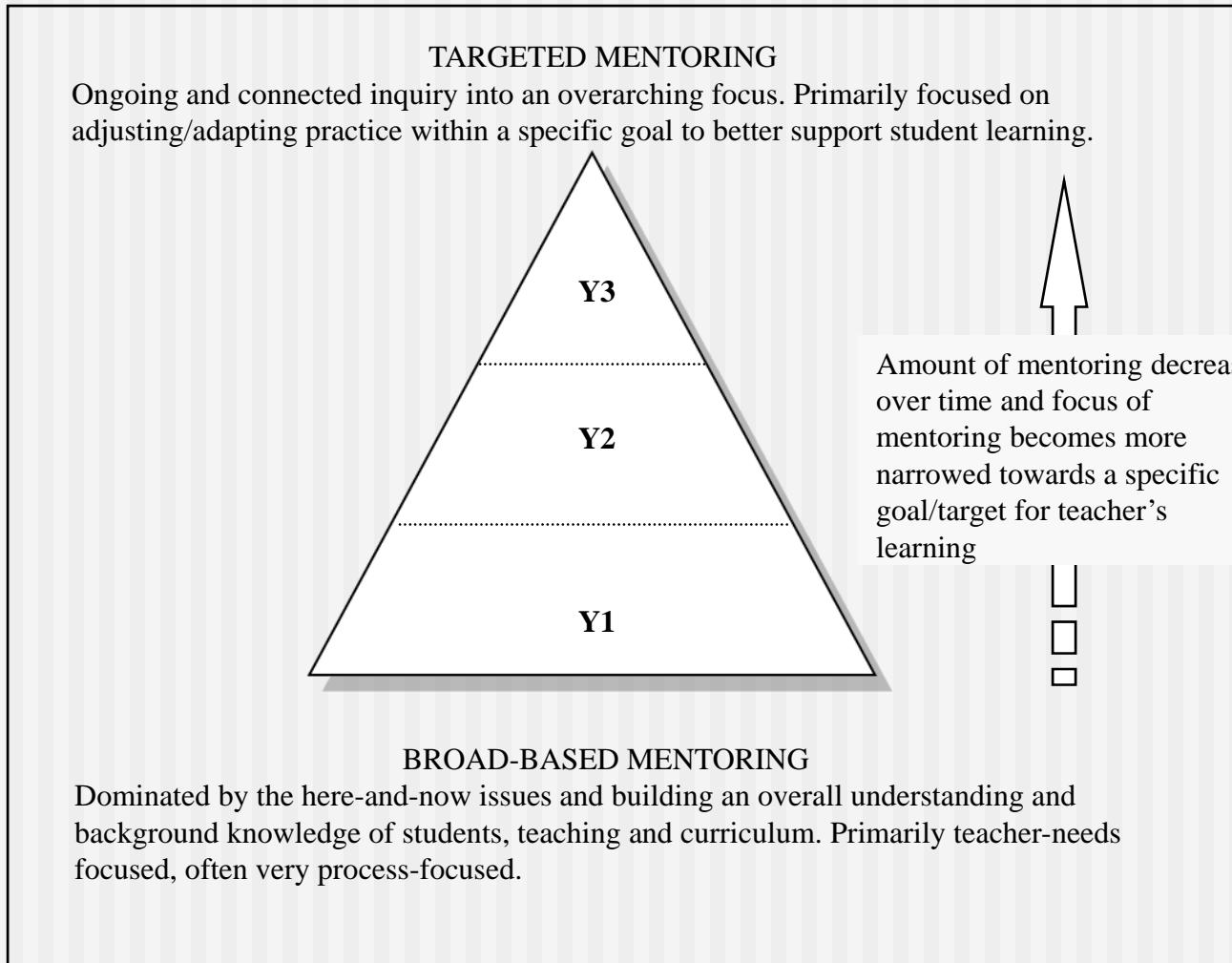


Y1 & Y2: Broad-based weekly mentoring/seminars

Dominated by the here-and-now issues, along with building an overall understanding and background knowledge of students, teaching and curriculum. Primarily focused on the process of teaching, not impact on student learning.

Y3: Seminars and on-call mentoring

Proposed program design to further support teacher learning



Barriers to classroom application of mentored learning:

- Here-and-now orientation, fragmented meetings
- Little connection to seminar knowledge
- Y2: PDP focus centers on *process* of completing PDP, primarily developing artifacts.
- Lots of quality reflection, but little projection and scaffolding of next steps...

Supporting application of learning through mentor scaffolding

Lesson goal/objective	Goal for inquiry into teaching practice/connected to standards
<p>Connection to prior knowledge</p>	<p><u>Reflecting</u> -What's working/not working? -Where do I want to go? -What do I know/need to know?</p>
<p>Building knowledge</p>	<p><u>Building Knowledge/Visualizing</u> -Observations of other teachers/mentor teaching -Seminar/curricular knowledge -Professional reading -Suggested ideas or strategies</p>
<p>Guided practice</p>	<p><u>Develop specific plan for my own teaching</u> -From observations, readings, seminars, what is important to bring forward to my practice? -How would it look/work within my own classroom context? -Planning with mentor on specifics (planning lessons or how to implement) -Co-teaching with mentor or mentor coaching in-action</p>
<p>Independent practice</p>	<p><u>Classroom application/teaching</u></p>
<p>Assessment of learning</p>	<p><u>Evaluation</u> -How do I know the effect on students/ student learning? -What's my evidence? -What worked/didn't work? -How would I adjust for future?</p>

Implications for beginning teacher learning within the mentoring experience:

- Importance of multi-year mentoring to deepen teacher learning and classroom application, beyond process or how-to towards outcomes of student learning
- Moving beyond broad-based mentoring after initial support and survival needs have been met
- Mentor scaffolding of information and strategies to help beginning teachers develop plans for applying what is learned.