



College of Education and Allied Professions
Center for the Support of Beginning Teachers
Strategic Plan Review 2008–2009

The Center for Support of Beginning Teachers (CSBT) has revised its activities for 2008–2009 and beyond to align itself with the Boyer Model, QEP, Stewards of Place, and the Millennial Initiative with UNC-Tomorrow as an overarching guide. The director of CSBT is involved with the design of the new Education Building on the Millennial Campus.

Strategic Goal 1 – Engagement (UNC-Tomorrow 4.3.3.1 and Stewards of Place) Offer opportunities, support services and resources guided by Western Carolina University’s UNC-Tomorrow’s 4.3.3.1 Initiative: “provide professional development to address 21st Century Standards, curriculum, and instruction with a focus on leadership in a variety of delivery modes (online, distance, and face-to-face)” to reach beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators in the region.

CSBT is committed to the Stewards of Place model and employs “direct two-way interaction” with our public school partners. CSBT sponsored programs are based on 21st Century Standards adopted by the N.C. State School Board. The Center, Western North Carolina Beginning Teacher Coordinators, the School University Teacher Education Partnership (SUTEP), other centers housed in CEAP collaboratively plan activities for beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators. Faculty members and students from CEAP and the Colleges of Arts and Science and Fine and Performing Arts also participate in program “development, exchange, and application of knowledge.”

The work of CSBT and its partners is “place related, interactive, mutually beneficial, and integrated” with CSBT “occupying the role of learner as well as teacher.” WNC public schools look to the Center as a resource, supporting rural and small city systems as they struggle to retain new teachers in the classroom. The systems are so pleased with the service that they contribute financial support.

Actions (for more information, visit <http://csbt.wcu.edu>):

- Collaborate with WNC Beginning Teacher Coordinators to design and refine induction program activities

- Offer professional development opportunities/support services and provide resources for **beginning teachers**
First-year teachers:
 - WCU Beginning Teacher Induction Symposium and Mid-Year Symposium - fulfill a portion of professional development required for new teachers in N.C.
 - Online Beginning Teacher Support Program, includes the following components:
 - Grade-level/content-specific learning communities facilitated by e-mentors (career teachers and university faculty members in CEAP, A&S, F&PA)
 - “Ask a Mentor”
 - Podcasts – WCU on iTunes U
 - Video Journals posted by WNC first-year teachers
 - CSBT portal housing a collection of information, articles, online resources, and webquests
 - Face-to-face professional development workshops facilitated by the CSBT director in school systems across WNC
 - Retired-Teacher Mentor Program – provides supplemental onsite mentoring to support beginning teachers in challenging situations
 - Regional classroom management workshops for WCU Lateral Entry Teachers

For Teachers in years 2-5 (new initiative): At the request of our public school partners, identifying and expanding support options to teachers in years 2-5 will become a major focus of CSBT. Professional development opportunities planned include:

- Face-to-face classroom management workshops
 - iChat pilot project for 5th grade teachers in their 2nd year of teaching
 - Access to the CSBT Online Support Program
- Offer professional development opportunities/support services and provide resources for **mentors**
 - Face-to-face Mentor Training and Mentor Refresher Training Workshops
 - Online E-mentor training
 - “Solving the Discipline Dilemma, How Can We Help?” – Classroom management workshop for mentors
 - Instructional Leadership Summit
 - Online support:
 - Podcasts – WCU on iTunes U
 - Access to CSBT Online Support Program

- Offer professional development opportunities/support services and provide resources for **administrators**
 - Provide opportunities for administrators to network and communicate with other administrators.
 - Professional development for school leaders in the area of new teacher support as a means of addressing the need for building level leadership that increases teacher retention will be pursued
 - CSBT will collaborate with the Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations to determine future directions.
 - Invite school administrators to the Instructional Leadership Summit, November 5, 2008.

Strategic Goal 2 – Research (UNC-Tomorrow 4.3.3.1, the Boyer Model of Scholarship, QEP) The Boyer Model of Scholarship provides research opportunities in the scholarship of application for the Director of the Center for the Support of Beginning Teachers (CSBT) to collaborate with Western Carolina University faculty members and students.

CSBT scholarly activity is focused on using evaluation data to sponsor and conduct research to determine the effects of induction and alternative entry programs on new teacher retention and development. WNC beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators are surveyed online annually (2003–present). Dr. Lori Unruh, Assistant Professor in Psychology, collaborates with CSBT Director to analyze the annual survey data. They are currently looking more closely at the effects of induction programs on lateral entry and traditionally prepared teachers.

Other topics of interest include:

- Levels of participation by grade level/content area in online learning communities
- Identifying the dispositions and skills mentors need to influence beginning teachers' learning and teaching
- Induction components and their effect on the development of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge
- Administrative support and its effect on teacher retention
- Effects of lesson-based observation and conversations on teacher retention

Actions

- Identify needs of beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators
- Collaborate with faculty members to collect data and conduct research
- Review and refine survey annually (additional questions were included in the May 2008 survey to identify factors that lead to persistence in the profession).

- Publish research report annually. 2007-2008 publications:
 - Unruh, L., Holt, J., Morgan, K. (October 2007). *WNC beginning teacher induction program: 2006-2007 Survey report*. Western Carolina University. The report was distributed to all stakeholders. <http://www.wcu.edu/9742.asp>
 - *Teacher Tips: A Collection of Ideas, Plans, and Strategies for New Teachers by New Teachers* - <http://www.wcu.edu/9712.asp>
 - *Supporting New Teachers: Mentor Tips* - <http://www.wcu.edu/9734.asp>

- Share research – In 2007-2008, the CSBT director and research coordinator made presentations highlighting the work of the center at one state and two national conferences in this academic year. The CSBT and SUTEP directors collaborated with faculty members from the College of Education, Health, and Human Science at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville on a presentation for AACTE: *Partnerships in Collaboration for Teacher Quality: Teacher Mentoring and Induction*.
2008-2009 Conferences:
 - State conferences (North Carolina) – Association of College Teacher Educators: Fall Annual Teacher Education Forum. “The UNC teacher recruitment initiative: Responding to NC’s teacher supply and demand.” Raleigh, September 2008.
 - National Conferences - American Association of College Teacher Educators: Annual Conference. “Innovation in beginning teacher support: Assistant principals as instructional developers. Chicago, February 2009.

- Implement the QEP - Synthesis: A Pathway to Intentional Learning at WCU:
 - **Engagement of School Psychology Graduate Students in Local School Systems** Course instructor for PSY 622: Academic Settings and Interventions, Dr. Lori Unruh, also serves as coordinator of research for Western’s Center for the Support of Beginning Teachers. After reviewing the results of the 2007 CSBT online surveys of beginning teachers, mentors, and principals, it was determined that projects focusing on supporting beginning teachers would be beneficial to local school systems.

Working with the CSBT director, Lori identified three WNC systems—Jackson, Macon, Swain Counties spring semester 2008. Students, working in teams of two, met with beginning teacher coordinators and learned about the academic intervention needs for first-year teachers in that particular county. Based on those conversations, each team developed and facilitated a workshop for the beginning teachers at one of their regularly scheduled monthly meetings. Participating new teachers completed feedback forms, developed by the PSY 222 students. At the conclusion of the project, students wrote a reflection paper that outlined their experiences, what they learned, and their perceptions of how new teachers benefited.

The response from the beginning teacher coordinators in the school systems that participated in this project has been very positive. Feedback from first-year teachers indicated that most found the information to be useful in their classroom situations. In addition, reflections written by PSY 22 students indicated that they also benefited. They reported that this project helped them learn to use school system needs to develop presentations that grab teachers' attention and get them actively involved. It also allowed students to complete an in-depth study of evidence-based interventions.

- **Applied Research by Students in EDRS 800: *Self-efficacy and related variables in the first five years of teaching.*** The CSBT research coordinator, Dr. Lori Unruh, served as a "client" for a group of students in Dr. Meagan Karvonen's EDRS 800, Advanced Research Methods, fall semester 2008. Through the CSBT online surveys, data have been collected on teacher self-efficacy during the first year in the classroom. This group extended the research by examining the relationship between self-efficacy and classroom practices, and looking at self-efficacy among early career teachers after their first year of teaching.

For more information about CSBT research, visit <http://www.wcu.edu/9704.asp>.

Strategic Goal 3 – Secure external funding (UNC-Tomorrow 4.7.3.1, Stewards of Place, the Boyer Model of Scholarship)

CSBT collaborates with WNC public school partners to seek and secure external funding. This process is mutually beneficial in that it "expands the learning and discovery functions" of WCU while enhancing the schools' "capacity to address and resolve" the teacher turnover problem. Grant funding also provides applied research opportunities for university faculty members "to address critical policy issues...that affect the region and the State of North Carolina."

Actions

- Actively seek external funding supporting teacher retention through federal, state and foundation grants - current funding for 2008-2009:
Transition to Teaching Grant (federal) – *NC TEACH II* – year three, \$125,000.
This grant works directly with identified school districts to recruit and prepare lateral entry teachers in high-need subject areas who are committed to remaining in a teaching position in a high-need school district for a minimum of three years. Supports new teacher retention.
- Proposals in process:
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation Grant – Project START: The Millennials. \$50,483.
This proposal focuses on supporting 2nd and 3rd year teachers. The format includes face-to-face and online support.