The Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Program in California

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Terry Janicki

Our challenge in California is how to overlay a framework, such as the Odell-Huling Mentoring Framework, on 1,000 districts, where last year we had 25,000 first-year teachers. Earlier in this conference, representatives from Connecticut talked about their 40,000 educators. In California we train and prepare that many new teachers practically every year. So our tasks can be a bit overwhelming. What I would like to do is talk very briefly about the rationale for our presentation. Initially we were going to discuss three documents: the California Standards for the Teaching Profession; our Standards of Quality and Effectiveness, which are very similar to the mentoring framework that Huling and Odell discussed and which are our vision of what a mentoring program looks like in practice, distilled from eight years of work with beginning teachers; and a brochure about the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program, which currently involves 70 programs in California and 5,000–6,000 beginning teachers. We were going to take some time to walk through all three of those documents.

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pieces, but then we decided that what we really wanted to do is to talk about why these materials are so important. We wanted to show that these state policies and practices are truly making a difference in a real classroom with a real teacher and a real support provider. We wanted our focus to be the perspectives of a classroom teacher and what all of our fine policy and practice look like in the lives of real people in classrooms with real children. To illustrate and communicate these perspectives, first Margaret Olebe will lay out the context for the school and the district in which the beginning teacher and support provider have been teaching. Then Elizabeth Washington and Katie Curry will talk about their perspectives as that beginning teacher and that support provider. At the end we will answer questions from the audience.

**Margaret Olebe**

As the former director of the Sacramento BTSA program I would like to share some statistics, to provide a frame of reference for the environment in which one of the BTSA programs operates. We had approximately 300 beginning teachers each year. We worked with 11 local school districts and one university in a two-year induction process. The process we used incorporated many of the ideas currently under discussion in the field: vision, reflective practitioner, standards-based, local contacts, collaboration with higher education, and student learning. We are now going to illustrate how the induction process actually occurs in one of our largest school districts in California—Sacramento City Unified School District. It has 52,000 students, it is the sixth largest district in California, it has its share of urban turmoil—three superintendents in four years are testimony to that. It is a typical California district in that 35 percent of its students are English-language learners. Spanish, Hmong, Cantonese, Mien, Vietnamese, Russian, and Lao are our top seven languages in the district, although there are over 70 languages spoken by district students. The district overall has a 50 percent AFDC rate and is equally divided among Anglo, Asian, African American, and Hispanic students. Within the district, the Father Keith B. Kenny School at which Elizabeth and Katie teach is a 650-student, K–5 school with an average class size of 29. The school was named for Father Kenny, a local parish priest and a community activist. This inner-city community did not have a neighborhood
school for 14 years. Father Kenny took up the cudgels with the school board and fought for the school, and now we have the Kenny school that these teachers work at daily and enjoy. These teachers are part of the Sacramento BTSA program, and they will describe how the program was operationalized in the local context. Operations are not identical even within a region or across the state, but we use the same program and teaching standards as guides for the specific activities of the teachers.

Elizabeth Washington

I wanted to take this opportunity to share some of my induction experiences, starting when I finished my student teaching on a Monday. That Thursday at 4:30 in the afternoon I went on a job interview for a teaching position, and by 5:00 the principal was saying, “Well, when can you start?” Like any other good job interviewee I said, “Well, tomorrow, of course.” He said, “Great, we’ll go ahead and get you a key and tell you where your parking space is. Let me show you where your classroom is. Good luck and welcome aboard.” So the next morning I picked up my class at 8:00 on the line and walked them into the classroom, and that is where the theory kind of fell apart and reality set in. I did not want to say anything to my principal—“What have I gotten myself into?”—because I did want to stay there for a while, but after a week or so I mentioned to him that I had heard about a program that was available to new teachers. He said, “That sounds good. I’ll get you a mentor.” At the next staff meeting he introduced me to a really nice woman. She is a very good educator, but what this mentor did for me was not really what I needed. One day she told me about a materials lab where I could get materials for my classroom, and another day she shared with me a nice slogan—“Teachers have rights, too.” That helped me feel good, but she was not available to answer questions very often. Basically she had a few ideas about what I needed, but she never really asked me, “What do you need in terms of support?” At about that same time, I met Kathryn Curry, who was a reading specialist on our campus, and she asked, “So, how are things going?” She looked really friendly, so I vented all of my frustrations, and she responded, “Have you heard about the BTSA program?” I said, “Yes, I did hear about the BTSA program. I have a mentor.” She replied, “Oh, no, that’s not what I mean.” Katie
then arranged for me to meet with the people in charge of BTSA, and she became not just a mentor to me but a support provider as well.

*Kathryn Curry*

I think what Elizabeth has conveyed is a sense of how difficult it is to get started. As a new teacher—or as a new mentor—you find yourself in a situation where everything is very real and very immediate. Because I was an effective teacher and had demonstrated that I could write well on an application I had to fill out, I was hired as a mentor in our district’s state-funded mentor program. At our initiation meeting, the woman in charge mentioned the BTSA program and said, “Anybody who is interested in becoming a BTSA mentor should see me after the meeting.” I did just that, because my personality is to want to do all the extras or the best things. So I became a BTSA mentor, a support provider, which is a lot different from my previous experience as a mentor. When I first chose to become a mentor, even I did it for the money. I was already helping people all the time. They would ask me, “How do you do this? What do you do with that?” and I love to give solutions, “Here, try this. Here, try that.” I did not get paid for it, though, so I thought I would become a mentor. When I entered the BTSA program, however, I found out that being a mentor is not about handing out solutions. It is not about telling somebody what to do. It is not a quick fix: “Here, this is what you should do.” There are quite a number of skills that are necessary to be a good support provider. Through my years in BTSA I was trained to work with new teachers. By the time I was assigned to work with Elizabeth, I felt fairly comfortable with my new role. I was at the same grade segment. I did not teach third grade as Elizabeth does, but I was in elementary education and I had taught several different grades. Also, I was on site, which was very lucky. Not all BTSA support providers are on site, but I was. As BTSA support providers, we were provided with lots of follow-up training. It was a lot of training. When we first started in August, we went for training for three days. I could not have done the mentoring job that I did without the tools I received in this training. The training involved coaching practices and reflective conversations. Elizabeth and I met weekly. The BTSA commitment is two hours per week in the
beginning of the year and one hour per week in the second half of the year. We overdid that. We went a lot further than that. We spent all day Saturday, sometimes, working. I had been taught how to have a conversation with Elizabeth and how to use questioning to lead her to where she wanted to go—not to where I wanted her to go. That was different for me, because I am by nature an answer-giver. I had to really struggle with that change in technique. In fact, there were a lot of times where Elizabeth sat patiently while she saw my mind spin: thinking about what I wanted to say, trying to avoid providing an answer or a solution and instead just clarify her thinking for her. BTSA had trained me in questioning, paraphrasing, clarifying, and styles inventory—what kind of style I had with respect to communicating and interacting with other people, how that style might help or hamper my relationship with a beginning teacher. I also learned about phases of new teacher development, as if we had forgotten what our first year looked like, although we never do. Still, it was interesting for me to learn how new teachers develop and where their hearts and minds are at different times during that first year. All of the tools and programs that I used were based on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. We also had workshops, curriculum workshops. The first one was on classroom management, which is important for new teachers. What is the first thing with which a first-year teacher is likely to have a problem? Elizabeth’s classroom represented an expansion—students were moved from their original classrooms into Elizabeth’s classroom. One can imagine that she had some challenging students and that classroom management skills would be especially important. Elizabeth and I would go to the Saturday curriculum workshops together. I could network with other support providers, and Elizabeth had the opportunity to talk with other new teachers. There were also monthly network meetings of just the support providers where we continued our training and practiced the strategies we had been taught. We also received training in the portfolio process, the specific one that Elizabeth and I used. I will share more about that later. Right now, Elizabeth is going to talk about the tools she learned to use.
Elizabeth Washington

As I alluded to earlier, my doubts began on my first day with my students. Actually, they began the first moment I walked them into the classroom. When I did my student teaching with a first-grade class for half of the practicum part of my teacher preparation program, the master teacher, on the first day of school, conducted this really sweet activity where all the children sat cross-legged around the teacher and the first child said, “My name is Mary, I like ice cream.” The second child said, “This is Mary, she likes ice cream. My name is Johnny, I like pizza.” This pattern continued around the circle. It was a nice ice-breaker, helping the kids get to know each other and feel a lot more comfortable on their first day of school. I brought my children into my classroom and was beginning to get them to sit around in a circle when one little boy just jumps up and says, “No way am I goin’ to do this.” Then he bolts out the back door. You know, my master teacher never told me that this was going to happen. I started wondering if I was supposed to be a teacher, I started looking at other job applications, and it was rather scary. One thing BTSA did for me was to give me some tools, and the first tool that I was able to use was the one where Katie would question me and then paraphrase my answers. She would say, “I hear you saying this. Now, where do you want to go with it?” This was a real asset to me because previously problems would spin around my brain without solutions, it would become very frustrating, and everything would just collapse in on itself. With the tools of Katie’s questioning, I was able to focus on an action, reflect on it, and implement it in my classroom. One of the other very important tools I acquired was the California state standards. The first one that we worked on in our BTSA program was “Creating an Effective Environment for Student Teaching.” I realized that going under desks and tipping back and forth in chairs did not constitute a safe environment, so we had to begin with just the basic logistics of the classroom—how to set it up and reinforce consistent rules and consequences in my room. Having that state standard as one of our first focuses was one of the tools that we used in my professional growth. Another tool that we are given as beginning teachers is called “BTSA Saturdays,” which occur once every few months. Sometimes it is just the Sac City School District, and sometimes it involves all of the Sacramento area school districts together. Our
first BTSA Saturday focused on effective classroom environments to engage all children in learning. An additional benefit of the workshops is not only do you acquire tools but you get to network with other teachers. You find out that they are going through the same things you are going through; you are not alone in this situation. You find out that their war stories are basically the same as your war stories, only with different faces. It was really good and helpful to recognize that. In addition to the networking, the BTSA Saturdays, the questioning, and the California Standards, another tool that we are given, and it is an ongoing process, is our portfolio. It is not a showpiece document, it is more a personal journal of a beginning teacher going through her first and second years of teaching—the starting point and the growth that happens over that time period.

*Kathryn Curry*

What does our portfolio look like? It has fingerprints all over it! It really is a working document. It is not a neat little package that you take in for your next job interview. That is not its purpose. Many support providers—especially those who are in the classroom—develop a portfolio of their own with their beginning teacher. The portfolio is based entirely on the standards—the six main categories of teaching. The portfolio entries or parts of the portfolio are designed to look at one of the elements within a standard, or two, or three—whatever the new teacher decides she wants to look at. Concrete evidence from the classroom is then collected to identify what is happening with respect to that standard. Then we do a lot of observing: a lot of looking at the students’ work, a lot of reflecting on what we see and what we do not see in this mode. We look at the standard: “What do we know about providing a safe environment? What do we want to know?” We plan a lesson that addresses those questions; we implement it in the classroom. We reflect on the evidence we get from it: “What have we learned about the students? Did they understand the concept? If we are working on engaging all of the students, was everyone engaged? What is the learning, what are the outcomes? What did we learn about our teaching?” There were times that Elizabeth would comment, “Wow, I see that although I wrote an objective, I’m not focusing on it all the time; I mean, I’m not always working toward it.” By looking at the
evidence of the six students whom she had picked to follow through in her portfolio, she would discover something was missing or not working correctly. Then we would ask, “What will you do with that? What will you change? How will you act? What will you do differently next time?” Using this process we assess the different standards. The portfolio process is really specific regarding the first two standards to review: classroom management and lesson planning, or classroom environment and lesson planning. Those two entries are outlined for the new teacher. After that, the new teacher makes his or her own action research question; the new teacher decides what needs to be an action for him or her. In the portfolio process, one of the most important things is reflection. During the portfolio process—with the standards, evidence, and reflection—for me as a support provider, as a teacher, I ultimately learned as much as Elizabeth did. I had been totally unaware of this whole process. I had not been using student work to look at the things I needed to look at . . . and I was an experienced teacher, one who had been praised as doing very well. But I really needed a lot more tools than I had. One of these tools was to look at a teacher’s ability as a continuum of development for each standard. We looked at each standard and asked, “Where are we in our teaching with respect to this standard?” This reflection—the conversations between Elizabeth and me regarding the standards—was a key learning tool for both of us. We would not have been able to develop without that heavy-duty thinking about what we saw in our students’ work and in the evidence that we collected. To better illustrate this process, Elizabeth is now going to share a personal cycle from one of her portfolio entries.

Elizabeth Washington

The part of my portfolio that I will now discuss relates to the third area on which Katie and I worked. There are other pieces in my portfolio that go along with this section, but this excerpt demonstrates the reflective process, how to think of an action plan, how to put it into practice, and then how to think about it again. The initial reflection relates to the standard “Teachers will engage and support all students in learning.” My initial goal for this domain’s focus was to facilitate learning experiences that would promote autonomy, interaction, and choice. By achieving this goal I hoped
my students would be able to have confidence and choices and become self-directed learners, a goal which can help them later in their life choices and society. Part of my plan was to develop ways to promote their learning of subject matter and of problem solving and critical thinking skills. When I left the credential program at National University I had a bag of tricks, but I needed to learn which ones to use, which ones to discard, and how to find new ones when the ones I have are inadequate. That was the initial focus when I began this portion of my portfolio. The tool that I used to reflect on this standard and my goal was part of a process called a “Pathwise Observation.” Pathwise is a tool used by the coordinators of the BTSA program for specific regions. An observer—not my support provider, but somebody with whom Katie and other support providers train—came to observe my classroom. The first question I asked was, “Is my principal going to see this?” The observer said, “No, this is for your own personal growth and development, so that you can grow as a teacher. It has nothing to do with evaluations by your administrator.” Pathwise provides a comparison of two different observations, one in the fall and one in the spring. This particular Pathwise report gave me a comparison of two observations of my ability to engage all students. One portion of the Pathwise documents from the first observation indicated that I could use a little more reflection on becoming familiar with students’ backgrounds. The second observation shows I now have more awareness of my students. However, my score of 2.0 (on a scale of 1 to 3) on one domain indicates that although I have not ignored other ways to engage students, I still use only one method to teach the whole class, instead of using choices. In reflecting on this, I asked myself if that was all right. Because this method is a fairly standard form of instruction and I know, although the evidence does not reflect it, that I have been using other strategies, this time it is all right. My next step was to prepare evidence from prior lessons to show use of different modalities and classroom learning. So I had my reflection, and I had my action plan. After my action plan, I wrote up a new lesson plan and collected student work to put in my portfolio. The subject of this reflection was a lesson on the relationship of social studies and science to the environment. My reflection, after I incorporated the lesson into my class and the children did the work, was really exciting for me. I
gave students a choice of four different projects to show understanding of different types of pollution and conservation habits. Three chose a question/answer hotseat, two chose to write poems, five chose to compose a song, and twenty chose to work in groups for a skit. They were really excited that they could choose. My assessment showed that the information that I was looking for was retained, and when the students were not bogged down with mechanics, they were able to present subject matter in their own intelligence modality. So my next step was to give choices more often. At the end of each area of a portfolio, there is a rubric to discuss with your support provider. Katie and I sat down together, and she questioned me using this rubric so that I could reflect on where I thought I was in various areas: whether I was developing, maturing, or accomplished. There are areas in which I am still developing; there are areas in which I feel I am maturing; there are areas in which I know I am heading toward being accomplished. Part of the rubric, “developing instruction that includes activities that allow students to direct their own learning,” is an aspect in which I feel I am still developing. Although I provide lots of activities to keep students busy, they are not really encouraged to direct their own learning at this point. At least that was my reflection on that part of the rubric. What is really wonderful is that I get to reflect on the process of the rubric itself and on engaging all students in active learning and to reflect on what is called a conversation guide. Some days, one in twenty, I feel accomplished and how great it is to be a teacher; other days I feel as though I am learning all over again. However, this conversation guide—asking myself where I feel I am on the rubric—shows me that I am at levels that are quite typical. That revelation empowers me with the knowledge that, although I am not where I would like to be, I am on firm ground from the development springboard. So my next steps would be that I need to work on not just providing activities but on teaching students how to teach themselves, by building their own tools for learning. As testimony to how effective this particular induction method is, I clearly gained a lot of information from what was basically just one cycle of my portfolio process.
The Beginning Teacher Support & Assessment Program in California

Kathryn Curry

Elizabeth and I asked ourselves what this process did for us. For one, it made us great friends. We work together all the time. We talk together all the time. I think that when I am 92, she will be there teaching me something. I want to emphasize that it has been reciprocal learning. It has been very interesting for us to hear the talk at this conference about various programs and know that we are doing a lot of the elements that have been discussed. It is pretty exciting, and validating too. You can see a lot of the effects in a classroom like Elizabeth’s. She had 30 children pooled from other classrooms. She had challenging children. She had 13 ELL (English Language Learners) students, 5 RSP—which is special ed—students, and 1 SED student in her class. So it was challenging. Moreover, she was in a reduced-size room, where space was really a problem. She was in a pod area that had six doors in it... six doors... hexagonal! Unfortunately, not all the teachers respected the fact that she needed to teach, and they walked right through her classroom—so it was a busy place to teach. She definitely had some challenges, but I think that the support she was given and her skills enabled her to teach her students despite these obstacles. We did a comparison using the Sacramento Achievement Levels Test. Although the percentiles were really low, it is important to remember that she had children who came in as non-readers and non-writers. We compared the scores from the children’s tests in the fall against their scores when they were tested again in the spring. There was movement out of the lower percentiles to a higher quartile. That is pretty exciting for a first year. Elizabeth had 14 students in her class who exceeded what is considered very high growth. There is also another side to this observation. She has students who have aspirations. One was reading a Sacramento State College catalogue. Elizabeth was excellent in the affective side of teaching, and she has a story to share about that.

Elizabeth Washington

One of my little boys last year had a habit of making bad choices. He would get in fights, yell, scream, throw his chair over... so Katie and I worked on consistency with him. Once he got to a certain point, he would have to have a timeout. We would do an in-house suspension, and Katie would take him when he really just...
could not control himself. It was very sad because the little guy used to say, “I hate myself,” “I’m going to kill myself,” and “I’m so bad.” I told him, “You’re too young to be bad. You have to be 109 before you can qualify for being bad.” He was also a non-reader. We worked with him on that as well. Katie worked with him as the reading specialist. As the year went on, I included those skills into my teaching repertoire, and he was weaned from her to me. This year his fourth-grade teacher, who never comes to visit me, showed up one day and said, “Elizabeth, I’ve got to show you something that this little guy wrote for you.” I was confused, or disbelieving. Then she gave me his paper, which he gave me permission to share publicly. It is called “The Boy That Got Smart.” Remember, this was a boy who could not write last year very well at all. He wrote, “One day I got up and all I seen [he said “seen”] was a teacher telling me that you’re going to get very smart. I was very proud to get smart. So I got smarter and smarter that they put me up to fourth grade when I was just ten. It was fun in fourth grade. You’ll get to do other things, too, like high school football, baseball, and all kinds of sports. That’s some of the things that you can do, but the best thing that is fun is getting more smarter. When my graduation comes up, my mom will be so happy she will cry. I’ll feel sorry for her, but I will become a smart man when I grow up. The End.” And that is a little guy who did not want to live past third grade.

Margaret Olebe

We will now address questions from the audience.

Q: What is the relationship between the Pathwise assessment and the other mentoring?

Margaret Olebe

A: In this particular program they were integrated. Essentially we have formative assessment in the BTSA program, so there is no high-stakes component to it, and there is a data curtain between what is gathered in the BTSA process and what the principal gathers in the evaluation for employment. For our formative assessment process we used the Pathwise as a formal assessment, put it inside the portfolio, and used it as a springboard to decide on a focus for collecting further portfolio evidence. Rather than seeing the formal observation model as separate from a portfolio, we tried to promote
the concept that a portfolio in its realization should encompass multiple kinds of evidence gathered from various sources. So that is how we integrated those two pieces.

Q: Did I understand that participation was voluntary for the novice teacher?

Margaret Olebe

A: That is correct.

Q: Then I am assuming that since the novice teacher was hired mid-year, she probably did not hear the normal communications about the BTSA program. What is the normal procedure for making novice teachers aware of it and encouraging their participation?

Margaret Olebe

A: It does vary, because we respect the local context. Each school district has an orientation session, as part of their “new teacher day.” The BTSA program is restricted to people who are in their first or second year of teaching. It is not for people who are simply new to a school or to a district. So we do have the formal orientation as a podium to advertise the BTSA program. Very often we include information in the packets that people receive when they are hired. We inform human relations departments about the BTSA program. They are our partners in this process. However, things are not always consistent. In Elizabeth’s particular school district, for example, the majority of teachers are hired between August 15 and September 15, for a school year that starts the day after Labor Day, so we cannot always utilize the formal orientation process.

Q: Since this program is voluntary, do you have any incidences where the administrators are involved in this program?

Margaret Olebe

A: Yes. Initially, in the first several years of this program, we had not conceptualized the role for site administrators in particular very well. It is something that we have since rethought. This year we have pilot training for site administrators so that from now on, in each district where there is a BTSA program, there will be specific tools provided to help site administrators work with beginning teachers. The other part of the question is the nexus between what is
happening in the formative assessment process and the formal evaluation for employment. We do have a very strong teachers’ association in California, but they have always recognized, supported, and been actively involved in the BTSA process. So what we have is that within local contracts, people are beginning to use the teaching standards for decision making regarding employment. In the districts with which I worked, we saw them evolving a plan, not a remedial plan for a teacher who is failing, but rather a plan for growth and reflection, selecting a standard and working on it. We do not as yet have a statewide outcome, but we do have pockets of change.

Q: One of the critical components seems to be the match between the mentor and the novice, as pointed out in this situation. Have you observed any trends or developed any advice about the matching of people? For example, is it important to have a female mentor with a female novice? There are all sorts of variables, and it seems that it could be personality or who knows what. Have you found any trends?

Margaret Olebe

A: We do have one guideline within the program standards that outlines the kind of person that we are looking for and makes suggestions about their practice. There are some guidelines in the criteria in terms of matching on-site people, looking for grade-level compatibility and subject compatibility, but we have really taken the “let the thousand flowers bloom” approach to matching. In some of our local programs, beginning teachers have a role in selecting the mentor; in others, mentors are assigned. In the program with which I work, in one region we had some districts that were using full-time-release mentors working 1–12 and others working on site after school, and what we found was that good selection processes and thorough training for support providers were the key elements. The quality of the relationship is important, and we let the local districts work out how that process could occur. We also trained the administrators and told the support providers that there is no shame in a match that does not work out in this kind of reflective growth process. We encourage them to come forward if the relationship is not working, and we reassign people as necessary.
There is no sort of magic formula other than to say that we try as much as possible in the high schools to have people who are subject compatible.

Kathryn Curry

I worked with a BTSA mentee who was a man, and while I do not think the relationship was quite as close, it was still really productive and a good learning tool.

Q: Has California, or for that matter any other state, given any thought to a type of induction process or mentoring for administrative personnel?

Margaret Olebe

A: We have a new two-tiered credentialing program for administrators and for those who enter the professional tier, which is defined as having obtained their first job as a site or district-level administrator. They are in an induction program, they have mentoring support both at the university and in the district, and they write a plan similar to what was demonstrated here in terms of their own areas of growth. We have expanded that credentialing program so that it includes non-university work, in terms of staff development at leadership academies, as well as traditional university coursework.

Q: How are the districts that are choosing the approach of a full-time-release mentor funding those positions? Is it local support?

Margaret Olebe

A: Yes. The state funds really are not sufficient to support the full-time-release people. In one district with which I worked, the superintendent used his discretionary funds to support two of the four positions. So the state fund really addressed only half of the need. They supported it locally, though, because of the perceived value.

Terry Janicki

I do want to add, though, if you look through the standards, you will see that in California we do allocate, we want them to allocate, $5,000 for a beginning teacher—of which the state pays $3,000, and we expect the local district to come up with $2,000. Our experience
is that you cannot mandate this type of program without expecting there to be a cost, and the cost is about $5,000—less than that if you factor in $1,000 in the number of release days and such. Without proper funding, you just do not get a quality relationship. It has been a problem because some districts want to take the money and spread it among all the people rather than provide a quality program for fewer. That has been a real dilemma.

Q: Please speak a little more about the guidelines that you have for mentor/teacher preparation. How frequently do the mentors get together for preparation training, and what kind of sharing goes on?

Margaret Olebe

A: I will give you the example of the program that I used. Some of the components are standardized. From the state we provide a standardized two-day training for support providers. That is a “training of trainers” model, which is spread throughout the local programs. People can deliver it in various ways, but it is recommended to be an upfront training. It deals only with the support and coaching component. There are another three to four days’ worth of training, which is delivered in modules so it does not have to be taken all at once for the purpose of developing the portfolio. For those who also elect to become formal observers using the Pathwise system, there are four days of additional training to become a Pathwise observer. Those are the basic blocks of training that are delivered at various times in configurations according to what particular tools the local program has developed. We also have a standard called “Provision of Professional Development for Support Providers.” In each local program we ask the directors to bring the support providers together at least monthly for additional professional development and networking sessions. Very often when I conducted such meetings, it would start out with a critical-incident session so that the support providers could share their practice and grow from the shared experiences. Then I might bring in a new piece of literature on teacher development or use some video case studies. At one point we went through some case studies that were done on the Haberman qualities to look at practice and develop it further. Continuous support for support providers is absolutely critical.