

Recruitment, hiring, and early-career induction support for Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers

By **Conra D. Gist, Travis J. Bristol, Francisco Rios, & Desiree Cueto**

While there is a fairly large body of research into the recruitment, hiring, and induction support of K-12 teachers in general, relatively little of this research has focused specifically on the development of Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers. However, when it comes to building and sustaining a diverse teaching force, certain practices do stand out (Motamedi & Stevens, 2018). For instance, successful recruitment efforts tend to involve targeted and extended outreach to potential teachers, efforts to cultivate personal relationships with them, and frequent networking with partner institutions that serve significant numbers of Students of Color (Noonan & Bristol, 2020). When hiring new teachers, schools and districts make concerted efforts to publicize openings early (with early-hire deadlines), include current Teachers of Color in the selection process, and reduce bias in hiring decisions (by, for example, using multiple measures to evaluate applications). And to support and retain Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers, schools and districts take care to offer competitive compensation and benefits, think strategically about teaching placements and assignments, provide high-quality induction and mentoring, and build capacity among school leaders to support these teachers.

Researchers have long found that induction and early-career supports are crucial to teacher retention in general (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Note, however, that the term *induction* tends to be used in a number of ways, referring to a unique phase in learning to teach, a process of socialization into new schools, and/or a formal and unique program for

supporting new teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2010; Ingersoll, 2012). Generally, induction is distinguished from professional development, which takes place over the trajectory of a teacher's career. It's no surprise, then, that much of the recent research into the early-career development of Teachers of Color has focused on induction. Four recent studies highlighted in the *Handbook of Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers* (Gist & Bristol, forthcoming, 2022) expand the research base in this area.

What the recent research shows

Pauline Williams and Elizabeth A. Skinner investigate a number of partnerships between educator preparation programs and school districts in supporting the induction of Teachers of Color, with a focus on promoting their cultural, social, and emotional well-being. They find that key features of such partnerships include collaborating on efforts to identify, recruit, and hire teachers and supporting prospective teachers through academic advising and the provision of financial resources.

More common, though, have been studies focusing on the *lack* of high-quality induction experienced by many Teachers of Color. For instance, three recent studies described in the *Handbook* examine the experiences of Black and Latinx teachers whose schools provided them with rigid and/or paltry supports.

For example, a qualitative study conducted by Erikca Brown describes how the racial composition of schools

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Research topics to explore

- How to value personal assets and professional characteristics of Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers in the human resources selection and induction process.
- The formation and sustainment of informal induction networks in the absence of adequate and responsive induction supports.
- The role and preparation of human resource leaders to foster equitable systems for teacher development across the career trajectory (novice, mid-career, and veteran) of Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers.
- The ways in which these teachers find voice, agency, and support in induction programs as they navigate race and racism in their school buildings.
- The use of a range of social network supports to support teacher development during the induction years.
- The critical preparation and development of human resource development and induction leaders.

affected Black teachers during their first three years of teaching. As visible members of a minority group in their schools, the teachers experienced intense and ongoing pressure to confront negative racial stereotypes and engage in cultural switching with their colleagues, and they believed they had to work harder than their white colleagues to prove their value and expertise. The study, Brown concludes, points to the importance of districtwide strategic diversity plans, which can include antibias training for teachers and administrators, hiring a critical mass of Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers, creating feedback loops with supervisors, and strong mentoring and professional support for all teachers.

In another study, LaRenda Janee' Harrison describes the induction experiences of Teachers of Color in a rural district in Mississippi. Much like Brown, she finds that these teachers grappled with colleagues' misconceptions about their preparedness, believed they were constantly scrutinized, and received limited opportunities for professional growth. Like Brown, she concludes by calling for mandatory induction and mentoring programs that are specifically tailored to meeting the needs of Teachers of Color.

Finally, a study by María E. Fránquiz and Cinthia S. Salinas, highlights the value of *informal* mentorship by describing how a group of nine bilingual Latinx teachers

offset the less meaningful induction supports provided by their school system. The teachers met regularly over the course of one year to participate in cross-generational dialogues called *pláticas* (Delgado Bernal et al., 2006), in which they drew upon their own cross-generational knowledge to analyze and make sense of their early teaching experiences. Through this informal experience, the participants strengthened their personal and collective commitment to the profession, the researchers conclude, suggesting that opportunities for such dialogue be provided throughout the continuum of their professional development.

What we don't know yet

Clearly, there is a continuing need for research into the consequences, for new Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers, of receiving inadequate human resource development supports from their schools and districts. As a number of studies have found, many new Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers feel highly visible and scrutinized by colleagues and, at the same time, invisible and unheard when it comes to their perspectives on teaching and learning. However, we don't yet know the extent to which current approaches to recruitment, selection, and hiring create barriers to the profession for Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers (see D'Amico et al., 2017). Nor do we have solid research, as yet, into approaches to human resource management that effectively address the unique challenges that Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers face in various school contexts.

Implications for policy and practice

- Use critical theoretical and conceptual orientations of race, justice, and education reform to understand and shape the policies, procedures, and practices of human resource development leaders charged with recruiting, developing, and retaining teachers, leaders, and staff.
- School districts in partnership with educator preparation programs should develop interlocking systems of human resource development supports committed to racial justice at each stage of the teacher onboarding process (i.e., recruitment, selection, hiring and placement, and induction). Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers should be involved in the routine assessment of the district's onboarding processes to ensure that effective human capital supports are in place to develop and sustain these teachers in the profession.
- Develop protocols to prepare human resource development leaders and induction specialists with

critical theoretical and conceptual orientations of race, justice, and education to better serve the development of Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers. ■

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Research studies to conduct

- **Interpretive studies:** Researchers can use critical frameworks to examine human resource development selection, admission, and placement processes; the matriculation of Teachers of Color through induction programs across different school contexts and working conditions, and the subjective experiences of these teachers with human resource development and induction supports.
- **Design-based studies:** Researchers can create and test interventions in which induction programs help Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers navigate race and racism in their school buildings. Such interventions may also serve to develop and prepare human resource leaders, mentors, and teacher leaders to support the practices of these teachers.
- **Effect studies:** Researchers can investigate causal relationships between human resource development practices and induction programs and the hiring, placement, persistence, retention, and engagement of Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers. To provide more robust explanations related to outcomes, they can develop large data sets and pair these data sets with qualitative evidence related to human resource development and induction practices.

Example: If the problem of practice is the inequitable and disproportionate placement of Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers in schools with difficult working conditions, then the partners may come together to develop theories of change and research studies to better understand and address the problem by implementing design-based interventions to elicit shifts in inequitable placement and working conditions. Additional research partners for this type of project could include human resource development and educational leadership scholars as well as economists, business and educator preparation scholars, and critical social theorists.