Evaluation of the New Teacher Center (NTC) i3 Scale-up Grant: Teacher Practice Impacts

SRI's analysis of outcomes for two cohorts of teachers participating in the scale-up of the New Teacher Center's intensive program of mentoring and induction for beginning teachers found that **NTC induction had a positive impact on teacher classroom practice after two years of mentoring support.**

New teachers often face the realities of their first classroom on their own and in isolation. Supporting new teachers so that they can be effective instructionally and retaining them in the profession are pressing needs, particularly in hard-to-staff schools and schools serving high poverty students. High-poverty schools tend to have high proportions of new teachers and often lack the capacity to support them adequately.

NTC has long worked with district partners to implement high-quality mentoring and induction programs to support beginning teachers. Unique to NTC's mentoring model are online formative assessment tools that guide mentors' interactions with beginning teachers and focus their support on developing teachers' instructional skills (e.g., aligning instruction with standards, lesson planning, assessing student learning, using evidence of student learning to inform instruction). Under the current grant, NTC is testing strategies for scaling up its model to reach larger numbers of beginning teachers in a wider range of district contexts than has been previously possible.

This analysis represents findings from a large-scale randomized control trial of NTC under way in grades K through 8 in five sites: Fresno Unified School District; Miami-Dade County Public Schools; New York City Department of Education; Polk County Public Schools; and San Francisco Unified School District. Each of these five sites has adopted a different set of strategies for scaling NTC's mentoring and induction model to all schools hiring beginning teachers in 2016 and 2017. Most significantly, in contrast to the original model of centrally deployed, full-release mentors tested under NTC's i3 Validation grant, some sites adopted a school-based mentoring model, where classroom teachers or other school staff served as induction mentors part-time, assigned to support just one or more beginning teachers at their schools.

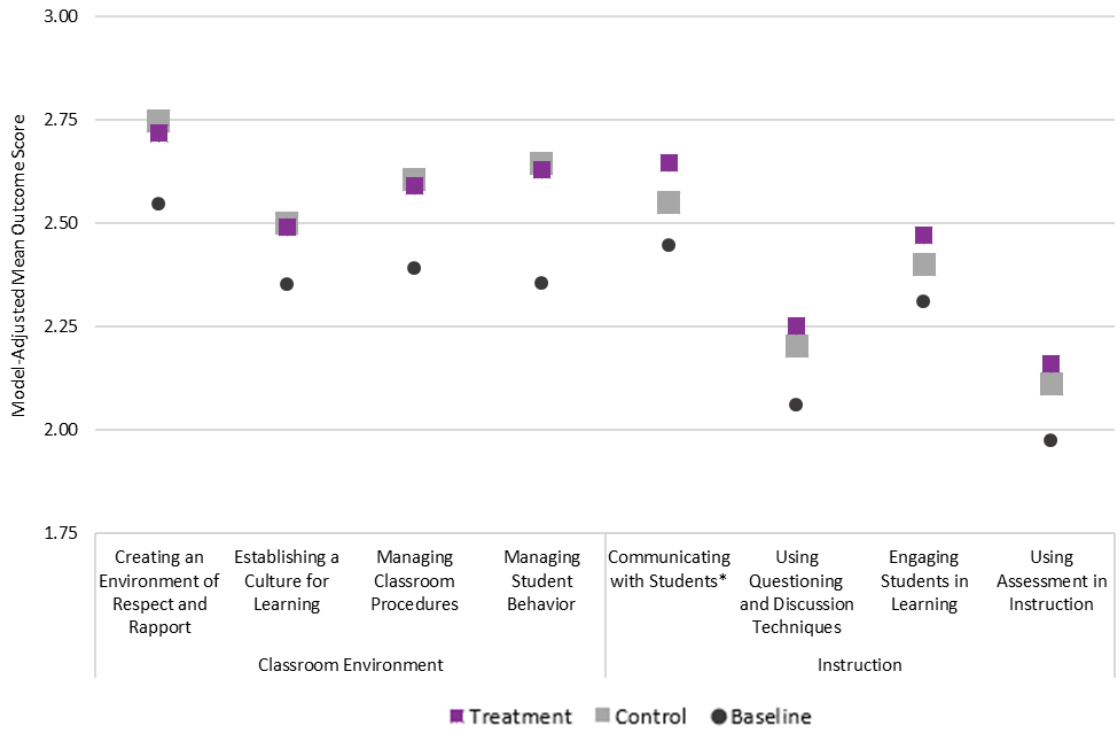
In the summer of 2016, participating schools in each site were randomly assigned to receive NTC mentoring or business-as-usual supports for beginning teachers. Participating schools are, in general, high-need, with student achievement an average of one-quarter of a standard deviation below other schools in their districts or states, and high proportions of students of color (74 percent) and students receiving free or reduced-price lunch (78 percent). This analysis

examined NTC's impact on teaching practices using the Danielson Group's Framework for Teaching (FFT). The FFT measures eight components of teacher practice in two domains, Classroom Environment and Instruction. Each component is measured on a 4 point scale.

SRI's analysis combining all five sites found that two years of NTC induction support had a positive impact on teacher practice as measured by one component of the FFT: Communicating with Students (effect size of 0.24 standard deviation). This is a moderate to large effect size, compared with similar interventions in education. There was no difference in impacts between school-based and full-release sites, suggesting that the school-based mentoring model, one of NTC's key scaling strategies, was as effective as the full-release model that was tested in an earlier study. There was low attrition from this analysis (below the What Works Clearinghouse's "optimistic boundary" for overall and differential attrition).

Exhibit 1 shows the difference in average outcome scores for each FFT component, accounting for baseline observation scores and school- and teacher-level controls. Both treatment and control teachers had generally higher average scores on components in the Classroom Environment domain than in the Instruction domain. The difference between treatment and control is also very small on the components in Classroom Environment, and larger in the components in Instruction. The one statistically significant result—Communicating with Students—shows the largest gap between treatment and control at outcome.

Exhibit 1. Treatment and Control Estimates of Teacher Practice



These findings provide promising evidence that NTC induction support, delivered via strategies that allow scaling across a variety of district contexts, can help beginning teachers surmount early obstacles to success and focus on increasing their students' learning.

This study is ongoing, and this analysis includes only evidence on the impact of NTC on teacher practice. SRI will examine the impact of NTC mentoring on student achievement and teacher retention after two years of mentoring.

SRI's final report on the evaluation of NTC's i3 scale-up grant will be released in 2020.