

Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership Induction Environment Scan Report

Case Studies

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Melbourne, May 2015

How to read the case studies

WORLD VISION
Cost efficient inductions leveraging technology across a broad region

RAPID INDUCTION
A 'rapid induction' program has been developed for new staff who are being deployed to respond to emergencies. This two-day in-person induction program is an intensive introduction to World Vision, the new starter's role and some aspects of the context to which they are being deployed. New starters are provided with a hard copy 'pack' of all relevant documentation and these inductions try to train working teams together.

PRE-START COMMUNICATION
World Vision recruitment and HR teams communicate with new starters via phone, email and Skype prior to commencing. They share information relating to the new starter's position and collect necessary documentation, such as police checks, working with children clearance, administration forms and visa documents.

FEEDBACK
Approximately 30 days into the new starter's working period, the new starter is invited to share their initial thoughts and observations on the organisation, their team and their induction through a semi-internal feedback process known as the "Induction Assignment". This is done via email, phone or skype, and the information is not kept with the new starter's employee file, allowing the new starter to provide feedback without having to speak directly to their team/managers.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY
To support a regionally deployed workforce with limited resources, induction focused communications between new starters and managers / other staff mostly take place via a range of online tools - including email, Skype and Yammer. Yammer chats, for example, can be accessed by anyone with a World Vision email address, however specific groups can be created for particular topics, and made 'private' if necessary.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE ALIGNMENT

1. Interpersonal interaction
2. Rapid starts
3. Constrained resources
4. Challenging contexts
5. Branch network models

OTHER INDUCTION ELEMENTS

- Face-to-face Interactions
- Core Induction Documents
- Peers / Buddies

A
KEY INDUCTION ELEMENTS

B
DESIGN PRINCIPLE ALIGNMENT
OTHER INDUCTION ELEMENTS

A The elements of each induction case study are explored, and are summarised through a number of symbols as follows:

	Rapid Induction	Inductions preparing staff to quickly commence work
	Pre-Start Communication	Communications with new starters prior to their first day of employment
	Core Induction Documents	Central documents used in the induction program
	Peers / Buddies	Colleagues engaged through the induction program – either new starters or experienced staff
	Use of Technology	Use of technology to present or communicate induction components
	Feedback	Seeking and acting on feedback about inductions
	Face-to-face Interactions	In-person induction training components
	Mentoring	Use of mentoring in inductions
	Involvement of Leaders	Specific roles for organisational leaders
	Networks	Access to networks of colleagues
	Observation	Observation of own or expert practice
	Resourcing	Resources allocated to induction programs
	Evaluation	Review of induction program impact and outcomes
	Formal Training	Typical 'classroom-style' education of new starters
	Building Resilience	Induction elements designed to build new starter resilience
	Links to Standards	Induction components that are linked to or aligned with recognised standards or guidelines

B The alignment between the case study and our design principles is presented, with details below:

Design Principle	Details
1. Interpersonal interaction	Organisations / induction programs should prepare new starters for work where high levels of interpersonal interaction is a core requirement
2. Rapid starts	Organisations / induction programs should prepare new starters for quick starts in their positions
3. Constrained resources	Organisations should practice efficient induction programs, either as a result of operating in resource constrained environments and/or through a focus on efficient operations
4. Challenging contexts	Organisations / induction programs should seek to equip new starters for professionally challenging work and physically or emotionally difficult contexts
5. Branch network model	Where possible, some organisations should demonstrate induction programs taking place within a 'central head office and regional branches' model
6. Links to professional development	Induction programs that aim to position the inductee to continue improving their capabilities throughout their career should be explored
7. Innovative approaches	Organisations should demonstrate that induction programs offer a broader range of approaches than traditional seminar / buddy / mentor approaches – including the use of technology

Case Study 1

WORLD VISION

Cost efficient induction leveraging technology across a broad region

WORLD VISION:

Cost efficient induction leveraging technology across a broad region

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To support a regionally deployed workforce with limited resources, induction focused communications between new starters and managers / other staff mostly take place via a range of online tools – including email, Skype and Yammer.

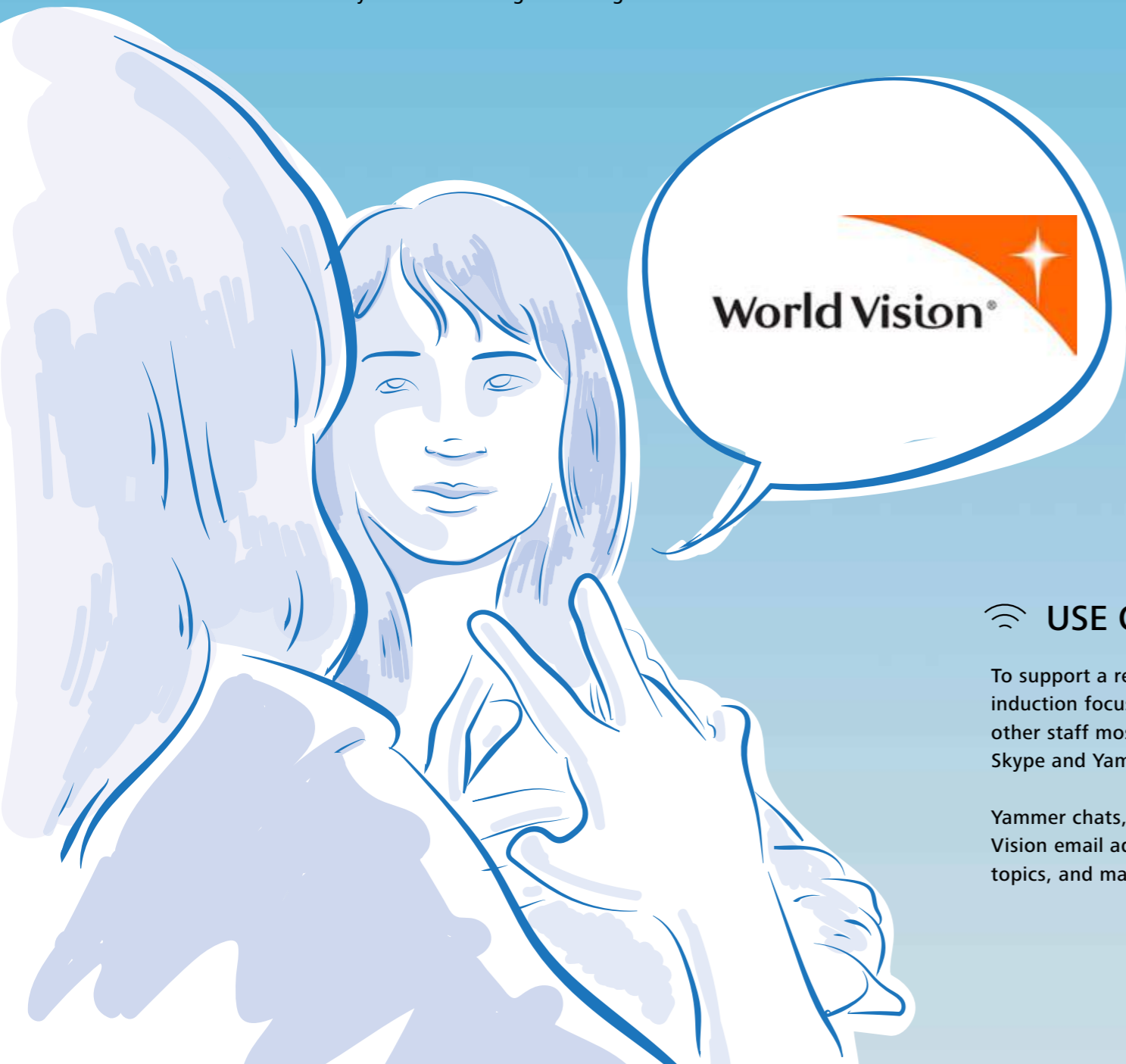
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Design principle alignment

1. Interpersonal interaction
2. Rapid starts
3. Constrained resources
4. Challenging contexts
5. Branch network models

Other Induction Elements

-  Face-to-face Interactions
-  Core Induction Documents
-  Peers / Buddies



WORLD VISION:

Cost efficient induction leveraging technology across a broad region

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

World Vision is a global not-for-profit, operating in over 100 countries, delivering services in child protection, disaster relief, education and economic development.

This case study concerns its Singaporean office – which provides centralised shared services, such as Finance and HR across World Vision's South Asia and Pacific offices.

The Singapore office is responsible for induction of all new starters across this region. In doing so it faces two primary challenges:

1. The workforce is dispersed – most employees work 'on the ground' in areas of need, usually in small teams operating in remote or challenging conditions; and
2. Resources are constrained and must be used wisely, including for induction.

The induction program was developed to address both challenges.

RATIONALE FOR SELECTION

This induction program was selected for inclusion as a case study because it demonstrates:

- **Onboarding quickly:** The Rapid Induction approach is used to quickly onboard staff who are be immediately deployed to challenging projects.
- **The organisation needs to use its resources wisely, controlling costs:** World Vision is a not-for-profit organisation which must use its resources wisely. This is a similar situation facing many schools.
- **Supporting a dispersed workforce:** World Vision's staff operate across a wide geographic area. World Vision's approach to communicating across this workforce – including providing some consistent induction elements – may be instructive for education systems seeking to share some common information across school regions.
- **Supporting interpersonal interaction:** World Vision staff are required to engage with a diverse range of peers and clients, and their induction must prepare them for this. New teachers face similar interpersonal engagement challenges.

IMPACT

The World Vision induction program is evaluated within the context of the organisation's broader HR systems and processes. World Vision conducts two primary data collection activities:

1. **Global Engagement Survey:** an annual anonymous survey covering a range of activities including culture and job satisfaction. Induction is not currently a specific topic on this survey, but can be picked up in areas relating to training and is commented on in general sections.
2. **HR Client Satisfaction Survey:** this smaller, HR-specific annual survey has dedicated questions about the induction approach – allowing for feedback form new starters and their co-workers/managers.

New starters can also share their views of their induction experience through their 'Induction Assignment' – a feedback mechanism (see next page).

While the impacts of the induction program have not been quantified, impressions from managers, existing staff and new starters have all been positive – the use of technology particularly praised for maintaining a 'human touch' while controlling organisation costs.

Case Study 2

MIDDLE HARBOUR PUBLIC SCHOOL

Using networks and aspiring leaders to put the NSW Strong Start, Great Teachers guide into practice

MIDDLE HARBOUR PUBLIC SCHOOL:

Using networks and aspiring leaders to put the NSW Strong Start, Great Teachers guide into practice

MENTORING

New Starters are allocated a mentor for the duration of their two-year induction period. This mentor guides the new starter through the basics of their orientation – introducing them to relevant staff and partners, identifying supports in place - and also guides them through the pedagogical growth that is the focus of the induction program.

Mentors are specifically trained to be able to support beginning teachers. Middle Harbour engages external experts to provide coaching to mentors.

FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS & INVOLVEMENT OF LEADERS

At Middle Harbour, beginning teachers are supported by an 'Induction Team'. This team takes ownership over the induction process and is comprised of:

- the school principal; and
- the new teacher's Supervisor: an 'aspiring leader' – who has been in the profession for **no more than 5 or 6 years** and who has shown leadership potential

The Supervisor is tasked with leading the induction program for the beginning teacher. This reduces the workload for senior executives while building the leadership capability of other staff.

New Starters meet with the principal of Middle Harbour at least once a week for the first four weeks of the induction program. They also meet daily to debrief with their Supervisor during Term 1. These meetings don't have a strict agenda, instead they are used to understand how well the beginning teacher is settling in and what additional supports they may need.

OBSERVATIONS

Observation of teaching practice is built into Middle Harbour's induction program in two key ways:

1. As part of the school induction program, beginning teachers are given the opportunity to observe the practice of experienced teachers, and work towards team teaching with Supervisors. These teachers have been specifically identified as leaders or high performers.
2. Once confidence and teaching skills are built, beginning teachers are able to observe each others' practice – including observation of peers' practice at other schools.

NETWORKS

Anchoring the entire Middle Harbour induction program is the use of the school Regional Network. This network creates opportunities for beginning teachers at schools within the same region to work together and learn from each other – usually in a face-to-face setting.




The Network is led by an experienced educator and trained mentor, and has regular meetings throughout each new starter's two year induction program. The Network focuses on building professional practice by:

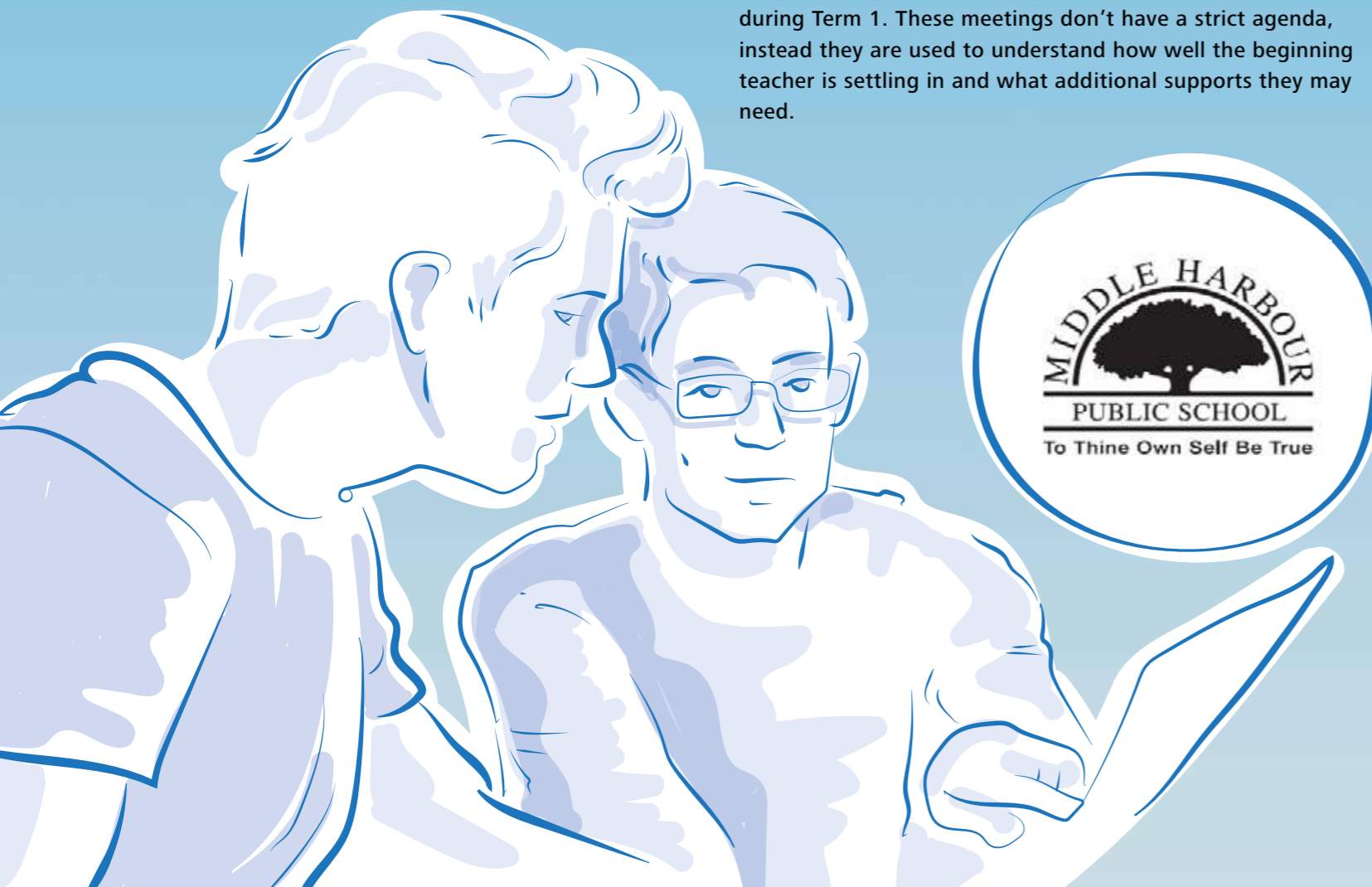
- grounding its activities in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- identifying and exploring areas of potential challenge or improvement; and
- observing the practice of other teachers.

Design principle alignment

1. Interpersonal interaction
2. Rapid starts
3. Constrained resources
4. Challenging contexts
5. Branch network models

Other Induction Elements

-  Pre-start Communication
-  Core Induction Documents
-  Resourcing



MIDDLE HARBOUR PUBLIC SCHOOL:

Using networks and aspiring leaders to put the NSW Strong Start, Great Teachers guide into practice

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

The New South Wales Department of Education and Communities has developed *Strong Start, Great Teachers (SSGT)* – an induction guide for beginning teachers and schools. This guide includes a model induction plan, supporting materials and dedicated government funding to be used for the professional development of beginning teachers.

Middle Harbour Public School is a government sector primary school in New South Wales with approximately 600 enrolled students. The school has based its induction approach on the SSGT plan and materials – and has built the associated resources (funding etc.) into its approach to inducting beginning teachers.

Beyond a central objective of successfully preparing beginning teachers for their work, Middle Harbour's induction program also aims to:

- retain high-quality teachers in the school and within the public education sector
- engage and develop emerging leaders within the schools
- support teachers to network with and learn from colleagues within their schools as well as other schools in the region.

RATIONALE FOR SELECTION

This induction program was selected for inclusion as a case study because it demonstrates:

- **Inductions in school education:** as a public-sector primary school, Middle Harbour's experience will be directly analogous to many schools and education stakeholders across Australia.
- **Use of networks:** Middle Harbour's use of regional school networks offers a highly valuable model for learning from colleagues outside the immediate school community.
- **Involvement of leaders:** Middle Harbour's use of school leaders is relevant, particularly the use of aspiring leaders to mentor new starters without taking significant time from already time-poor executives.

IMPACT

Many factors influence student and staff outcomes in a school. Therefore it is difficult to split out or causally attribute outcomes from the induction program. Nevertheless, there are a number of positive signs correlating with this induction approach, including:

- Feedback from participating teachers has been positive:

"I have been so lucky to start my career with amazing guidance and support in a highly professional environment. It was the best possible start that I could have had."

"This valuable guidance and support came from school leaders, mentors and my teaching colleagues who all modelled a high level of professional standards and teaching practices."

- Anecdotally, school leaders and teachers indicate that the induction program has been well received, lifting beginning teacher confidence, encouraging retention and leading to improved practice.

Case Study 3

NORTHROP GRUMMAN SHIPBUILDERS

Leveraging mentors and online social networks to induct new staff

NORTHROP GRUMMAN SHIPBUILDERS:

Leveraging mentors and online social networks to induct new staff

MENTORING

Each new starter is allocated a 'Navigator' – an experienced colleague from the same department, but outside of the new starter's management chain. The navigator is a trained mentor, tasked with guiding the new starter for their first 180 days. They are expected to take time during work hours to support the new starter.

This involves helping them assimilate and gain knowledge of the physical facility and new systems and procedures they may face. Navigators and new starters meet regularly to discuss progress and any issues.

EVALUATION

To ensure that this crucial element of its HR strategy is successful and delivering a return on investment, Northrop Grumman collects evidence of the induction program's effectiveness, including:

- Rates of attendance for training sessions
- Timeliness of completing preparatory activities, such as accessing computers etc.
- Levels of interaction between new starters, navigators and managers
- Perceptions of program participants.

NETWORKS & USE OF TECHNOLOGY

To support the induction program, Northrop Grumman has developed a dedicated internal social networking platform called "Connect1NG". This platform was designed by a multidisciplinary internal design team and is employee-run – requiring relatively few resources to develop and maintain. Its objectives are:

- Creating opportunities for socialising and building networks across the business
- Sharing and retaining knowledge
- Reinforcing the NG culture across all employees.

During their first 30 days, new starters are given a number of opportunities – online and offline – to join, however participation is voluntary.

FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS & INVOLVEMENT OF LEADERS


As part of inductions, Northrop Grumman developed the L.E.A.R.N (learning, expanding, achieving, results networking) program. This program deepens employee knowledge of a variety of operations and information through monthly information sessions (in-person and online) presented by experts and senior officers.

This allows for transmission of valuable information within the company and provides further networking opportunities. The program also allows for Q&A time, connecting senior leaders to employees – including new starters – in an informal atmosphere.

Design principle alignment

2. Rapid starts
4. Challenging contexts
6. Links to professional development
7. Innovative approaches

Other Induction Elements

 Formal Training



NORTHROP GRUMMAN SHIPBUILDERS:

Leveraging mentors and online social networks to induct new staff

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Northrop Grumman (NG) is a leading global security and advanced manufacturing company. Their US shipbuilding division provides a significant proportion of the US Navy and Coast Guard's vessels through a number of large shipyards. The Newport News shipyard employs approximately 20,000 workers and on-boards approximately 2,000-3,000 new workers per year.

New workers face some complex and challenging conditions including:

- Operating in vast shipyards (Newport is 550 acres);
- Potentially challenging machinery, moving vehicles and hazardous materials; and
- Working within the potentially strict regulatory parameters associated with being a defence contractor.

Induction of new employees had historically been outsourced. However, in recognition of the importance of induction to NG's overall talent management strategies, this was brought in-house to address some concerns and identify improvement opportunities.

RATIONALE FOR SELECTION

This induction program was selected for inclusion as a case study because it demonstrates:

- **Use of technology/social media:** The NG case study shows the value of connecting new starters with each other and with experienced staff using online social network platforms. This is highly relevant in educational contexts where learning from colleagues is crucial, but resources required to actually engage in-person can be scarce.
- **Inductions effectively leveraging mentoring:** NG's induction utilises a time-specific mentoring arrangement (for the first 180 days), which may have lessons for schools.

IMPACT

The updated approach to induction has been considered successful by NG's human resources team as well as new starters themselves. Specifically:

- Timely participation in various elements of the induction program, including completion of induction sessions, was high (89% of new starters completed elements within desired timeframes);
- A number of factors influencing employee time-to-productivity, such as setting up and accessing computers and receiving personal protecting equipment, were sped up compared to previous averages; and
- Participation in regular meetings and the number of interactions between new starters, supervisors and 'navigators' (see previous page) were consistently higher than they had been previously.

Additionally, based on HR metrics such as worker attrition and turnover rates, the new induction program is also considered quite successful.

Case Study 4

ST HELENA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Using technology to develop sustainable induction approaches

ST HELENA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL:

Using technology to develop sustainable induction approaches

PRE-START COMMUNICATION & USE OF TECHNOLOGY

St Helena's appears unique in the way it approaches recruitment. When hiring new teaching staff, the school is very specific about its preferred model of teaching and includes a video recording of what it considers to be excellent teaching practice.

The school's leaders believe this helps prospective applicants to understand the school's education culture and ethos – encouraging appropriate candidates to apply and in effect, beginning the induction process before a hiring decision is even made.

MENTORING & INVOLVEMENT OF LEADERS

Each new starter is allocated an Assistant Principal who acts as a mentor, shepherding them through their induction training and working with them to ensure they're on a path to improved practice.

The learning goals and development priorities of the new starter and the school are established at the outset, and a program for developing them is built – with milestones (linked to observation) at the 2, 6 and 8 week marks. The intensity of this support will depend on the new starter – with graduate teachers typically receiving more support than those with more experience.

OBSERVATION & USE OF TECHNOLOGY

A critical aspect of new teacher induction at St Helena's is the observation of practice.


Experienced teacher practice is observed both in-classroom as well as using pre-recorded videos that are worked through/analysed by the beginning teacher and their experienced mentor.

The new starter's practice is observed by experienced teachers – with opportunities for improvement noted along a pre-developed teaching performance template, which is checked against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to ensure alignment.

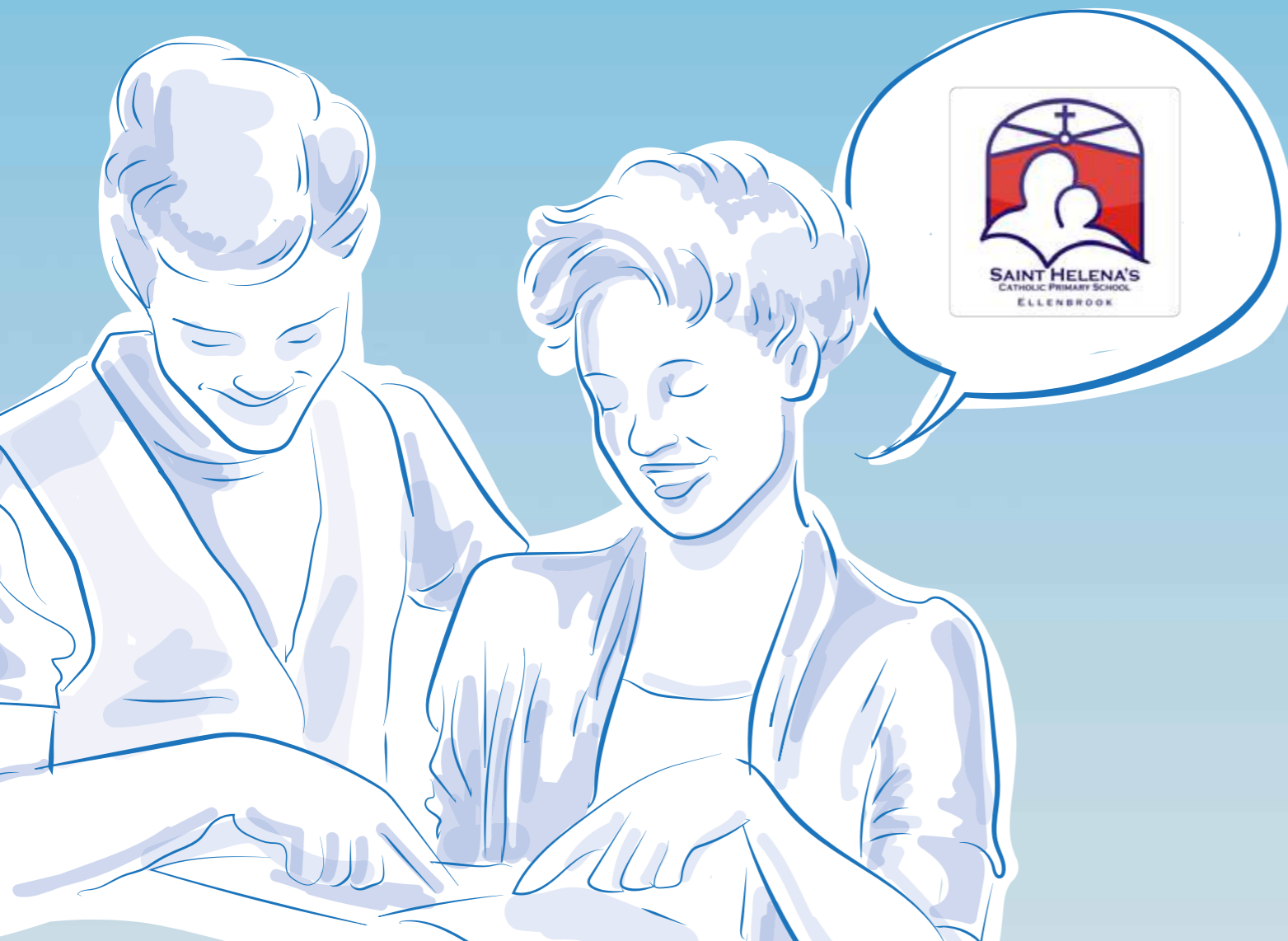
Design principle alignment

1. Interpersonal interaction
2. Rapid starts
3. Constrained resources
6. Links to professional development
7. Innovative approaches

Other Induction Elements

 Core Induction Documents

 Evaluation



ST HELENA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL:

Using technology to develop sustainable induction approaches

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

St Helena's is a Catholic primary school located in the suburbs of Perth, WA. It is a relatively small school, with approximately 50 teaching staff and 550 students.

The school's leaders are focused on ensuring the quality of its teaching staff – investing time and resources in professional development and induction of new staff members. In the school's annual performance statement, they pride themselves on having:

"an involved and committed staff who work together, pushing each other and their students to be the best. Our teachers work to improve their ability to teach. They read and explore the techniques used by others in a never-ending effort to better themselves and their skills."

In this context, the school's leaders have also focused heavily on creating a tailored and in-depth induction program – combining video technology with in-person observation and discussion.

RATIONALE FOR SELECTION

This induction program was selected for inclusion as a case study because it demonstrates:

- **Innovation in the length of the induction program:** The St Helena's induction program commences well before a new teacher commences at school – including communication of pedagogical expectations through the recruitment process. This demonstrates that schools need not wait until a new starter actually reaches the classroom to start their induction.
- **Use of technology:** St Helena's uses videos of teaching practice as part of both the recruitment and the induction process. This will be relevant to education stakeholders seeking to enhance opportunities for observation but who may face resource limitations in doing so.
- **Inductions in school education:** as a metropolitan primary school, St Helena's experience may be analogous to many other schools.

IMPACT

There are a number of factors influencing student and staff outcomes in a school. It is difficult to split out or causally attribute outcomes from the induction program. Nevertheless, there are a number of positive signs correlating with this induction approach, including:

- Indicators of student performance, such as literacy and numeracy scores against local and national benchmarks i.e. NAPLAN, have improved over time.
- Staff retention is high, for example between 2012 and 2013, 97% of staff were retained.
- Other schools in St Helena's network have expressed interest in their approach – suggesting its value.

These factors combine to suggest that St Helena's approach to inductions can be considered successful.

Case Study 5

NORTHEAST HEALTH WANGARATTA

Dedicated human resources and early interventions for at-risk staff

NORTHEAST HEALTH WANGARATTA:

Dedicated human resources and early interventions for at-risk staff

PRE-START COMMUNICATION & USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Northeast Health Wangaratta has appointed a dedicated staff member to manage new starters and trainees – including coordinating inductions. Prior to their first day, the coordinator reaches out to new starters, identifying required information, sharing checklists and confirming commencement plans.

This communication is supported by an online communication channel – where the new starter information presented (finance, personal details, background etc) is automatically tailored based on the new starters' responses to certain questions.

LINKS TO STANDARDS

The induction program, including pre-start communication, is designed to align with industry standards/regulations including:

- Workplace Health and Safety
- Infection control
- Risk management.

These standards are explicitly referenced at various stages in the induction journey, from pre-start information through to daily work.

PEERS/BUDDIES & OBSERVATION

For most medical trainees, observation of practice is a constant component of their time at the hospital. For more senior staff, this may not apply.

New starters are allocated a key 'contact' for each shift – which may be the same person throughout or may differ based on rostering requirements. Their contact in some ways acts as a supervisor more than a peer – their focus is both guiding the new starters as well as observing their practice to identify and action improvement opportunities.

BUILDING RESILIENCE



Both the induction coordinator and the assigned buddies/supervisors are constantly working with new starters to identify any who may be at risk of disengaging or otherwise struggling through their induction/training.

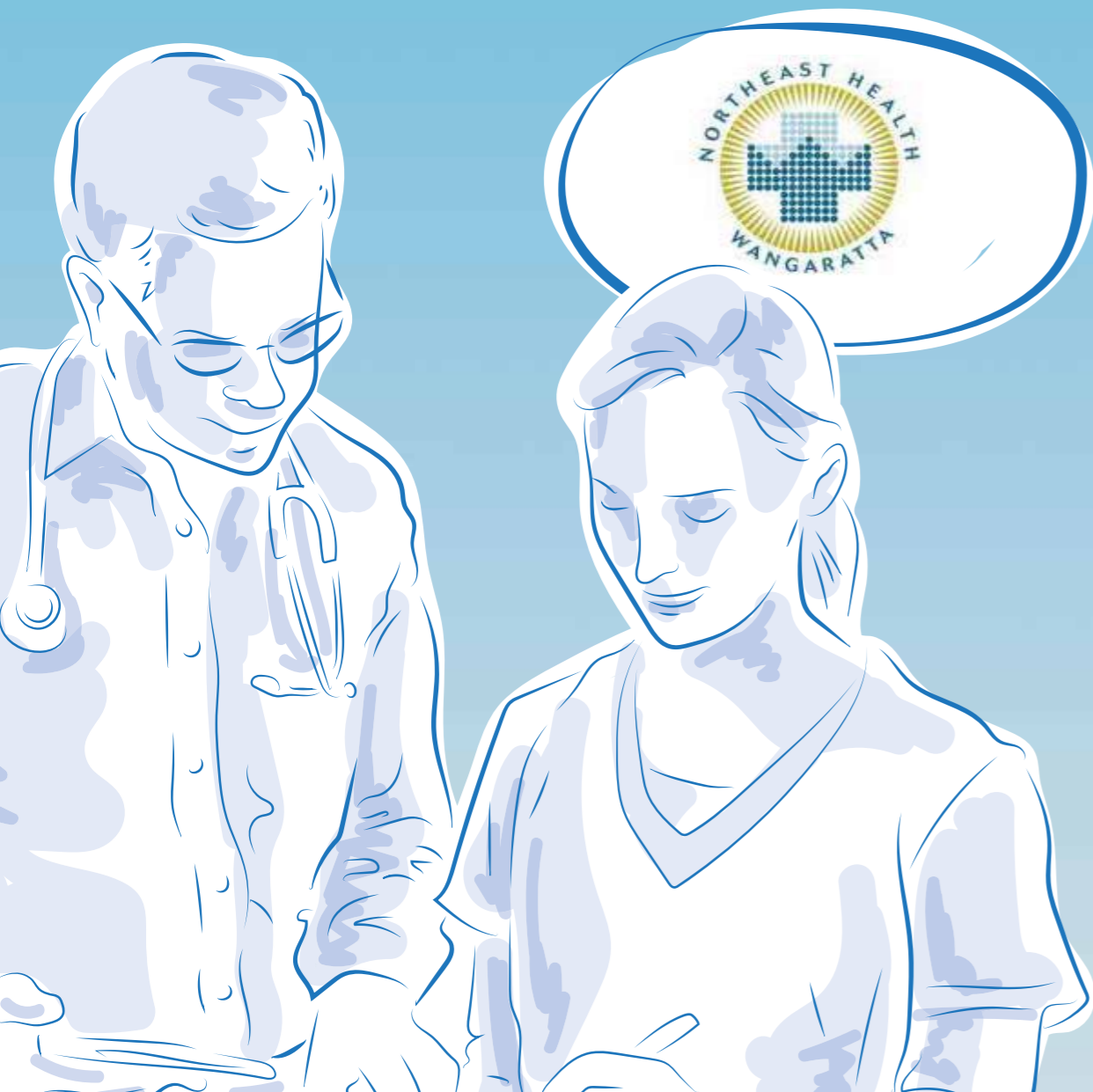
Where a new starter is identified as 'at risk' a learning plan is specially developed, as are particular interventions to ensure the new starter's risks are managed. This is led by the induction coordinator, and includes relevant staff as required.

Design principle alignment

1. Interpersonal interaction
2. Rapid starts
3. Constrained resources
4. Challenging contexts
6. Links to professional development

Other Induction Elements

-  Face-to-face Interactions
-  Evaluation



NORTHEAST HEALTH WANGARATTA:

Dedicated human resources and early interventions for at-risk staff

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Northeast Health Wangaratta (NHW) provides healthcare services across the Hume region of Victoria. NHW services a primary catchment of 28,000 and an extended catchment of 74,000, a total just over 100,000 people. It has approximately 700 staff, of which approximately 100 are non-medical support staff.

One of NHW's strategic priorities is around building workforce capability and sustainability – for itself as a healthcare provider and for the overall Victorian healthcare system. It pursues this strategy partly by training its own staff and partly by working with higher education providers to train healthcare and medical students – as interns and residents.

This means that NHW is faced with a constant stream of new staff throughout the year – at various levels of experience and capability. This creates administrative and training challenges of coping with the needs and training requirements of this diverse and fast-changing cohort – placing even greater pressure on NHW to have an effective and efficient induction program.

RATIONALE FOR SELECTION

This induction program was selected for inclusion as a case study because it demonstrates:

- **Induction with references or links to standards:** As a health services provider, NHW must ensure its staff and services adhere to accepted standards, and that induction support this. There may therefore be analogous learning for schools, where staff use standards for development and growth.
- **Provision of dedicated support for new starters:** NHW allocates dedicated resources to ensuring that its induction program succeeds and new starters are supported. This extends to providing interventions for those new starters who appear at risk of disengagement.

IMPACT

NHW seeks staff and student feedback on the overall organisation and the induction program specifically. They seek this informally from new starters who go through the induction program as well as through a structured feedback program called "Fresh Eyes".

The Fresh Eyes program involves an opportunity for all new starters to provide feedback – in person or written – directly to NHW's CEO about the induction program, and the organisation. This information is not systematically stored or analysed, however the CEO reports consistent positive feedback about the induction program, with recent starters commenting that the program made them "feel welcomed" to the organisation.

NHW has also identified strong performance in terms of attraction and retention of staff. The graduate intake for the nursing program strengthened despite facing challenges from its regional setting and lack of links (until very recently) to a University program. In this context, the induction program is considered by managers to have supported the perception of the organisation as an employer of choice and hence the attraction of talent.

Case Study 6

CALIFORNIA FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR TEACHERS:

A two-year induction program built around mentoring and linked to teaching standards

CALIFORNIA FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR TEACHERS:

A two-year induction program built around mentoring and linked to teaching standards

RESOURCING

A range of materials and support are provided to participating teachers. Materials that guide the beginning teacher and mentor through the induction program are provided, including questions to the teacher and spaces for written responses and reflections. These materials are kept in folders within a hard shell "CFASST box," which is also referred to by many participants as, simply, "the box."

Many participant teachers were also offered release time (including replacement teachers) to facilitate completion of the 12 events, including observation of other teachers' practice.

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing also made resources available to support evaluation of the program.

MENTORING, OBSERVATIONS AND LINKS TO STANDARDS

First and second year teachers are engaged in a series of 12 "events" (six in each year) based on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. They consist of a set of six standards that are intended to guide teachers as they define and develop their practice. The standards are organized around six interrelated categories of teaching practice:

1. engaging and supporting all students in learning;
2. creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning;
3. understanding and organizing subject matter for student learning;
4. planning instruction and designing learning experiences for all students;
5. assessing student learning; and
6. developing as a professional educator.

With the guidance of their trained mentor, beginning teachers work through the events by gathering information about best practices, planning lessons, and receiving feedback on their teaching through observations by the support provider. Typically this involved being observed more than three times per year.

MENTORING

Prior to a new teacher's commencement, the pool of potential teacher mentors are specifically trained to support new starters. Approximately 80% of these mentors are full-time classroom teachers, and most (94%) have taught for more than 6 years.

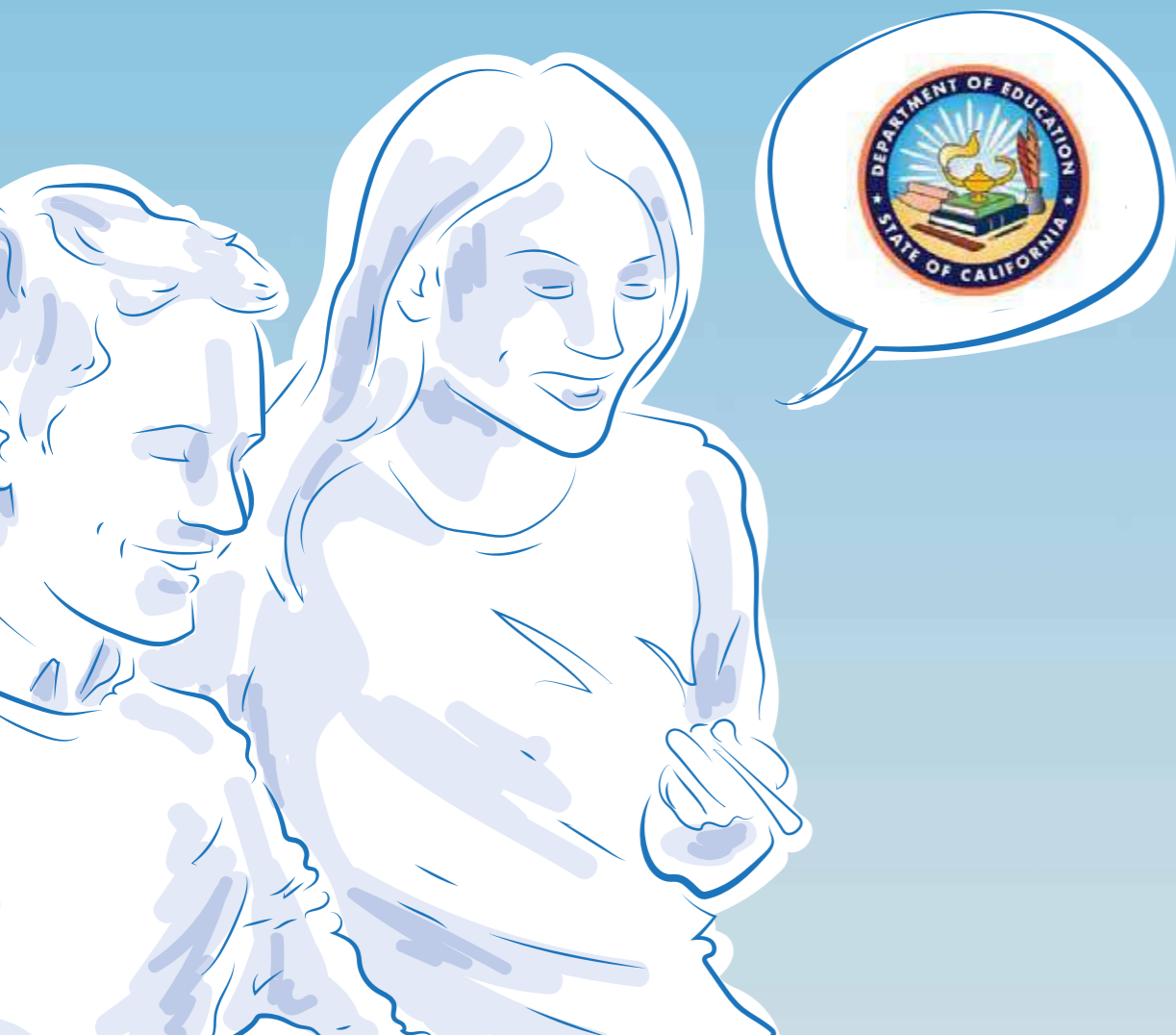
These mentors are then specifically matched to beginning teachers at participating schools. Approximately two thirds of mentors met with their assigned beginning teachers at least once per week for 30-90 minutes.

Design principle alignment

1. Interpersonal interaction
2. Rapid starts
4. Challenging contexts
6. Links to professional development

Other Induction Elements

- ✓ Assessment



CALIFORNIA FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR TEACHERS:

A two-year induction program built around mentoring and linked to teaching standards

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

The Californian State Government identified a series of trends across their education system – in terms of declining student outcomes and difficulties retaining teachers in the profession, which created costs for the state and further threats to student outcomes.

As a result, the California Department of Education and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing co-sponsored a state-funded program to improve the initial training and induction of new teachers.

The California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers (CFASST) is a structured, two-year induction program for beginning teachers that is used across the state as a central component of California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program.

The programs collectively involved over 18,000 teachers across 2013-14.

RATIONALE FOR SELECTION

This induction program was selected for inclusion as a case study because it demonstrates:

- **Inductions across a school system:** CFASST demonstrates how an education system responded to the need to improve the inductions of new teachers – this may be valuable to Australian education systems.
- **Inductions effectively leveraging mentoring:** CFASST involves a highly structured and resourced mentoring program. Many Australian schools utilise mentoring and hence may be able to learn from aspects of this approach.
- **Inductions with references or links to standards :** CFASST's two-year induction program is structured along relevant Californian standards. This demonstrates how Standards can be deeply embedded in induction programs.

IMPACT

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing commissioned a study of the impact of the program. The study looked at the impact of the program on the teaching practices of beginning teachers and on the learning of their students. In summary, this evaluation found that the program was associated with improved teacher and student outcomes, including:

- Teachers with high exposure to the program were better at instructional planning and analysing their practice, were more likely to ask students higher-order questions, and were more likely to provide substantive, specific feedback to students.
- The students of teachers who engaged with BTSA/CFASST at a high level outscored the students of low engagement teachers by an average of 0.25 standard deviations across six standardized tests.

However, some districts and counties that utilise the program reported finding the cost of providing the program burdensome, raising questions around its ongoing sustainability.