Perspectives on Support and Development: Teacher Induction Practices in Selected Foreign Countries as Seen through North American Lenses

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INTRODUCTION

As part of the ongoing work of the U.S./China Center for Educational Excellence at Michigan State University, a review was begun of literature relating to Chinese and other Asian nations' teacher induction practices as viewed through the lenses of North American research. Focusing on induction meant an examination of the various processes by which new teachers, often straight from university training programs, are enculturated into the world of full-time, and full-responsibility, teaching. In the process of looking through the existing research, the original focus was expanded to include some of the other nations that were included in various treatments of Asian nations' practices. These nations were also included, in the end, in the interest of taking a wider view of induction as a phenomenon. This paper is the result of that effort, and it focuses on the practices of China and Japan, as well as New Zealand, which is held up with Japan as a model induction program, and France, which has a particularly unique induction system that provides some useful alternative ideas.

This approach is meant to be useful to a wide audience, and this is fitting, as it seems that a wide audience is available: many have a stake in induction practice. For the teacher or administrator who wishes to think about their own induction experiences or practices, there are plenty of points to ponder. Anyone considering starting a school, or working to create or change an induction program, may wish to take into account the wider philosophical and practical issues represented by these varied approaches. Policymakers who are interested in issues of economic competitiveness, who want their educational systems to produce well-prepared graduates, are attending more to teacher quality, and thus, among other things, to induction (Cobb, 1999). Indeed, US student performance on NAEP and TIMSS tests have also aroused a certain interest in induction, since quality teachers are one factor in producing good student outcomes (Wang, Coleman, Coley, & Phelps, 2003; Wong, Britton, & Ganser, 2005) and countries are beginning to "recognize the first years of teaching as a critical time for develping effective skills and positive attitudes regarding the profession." (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995, p.10)

Between the retirement of baby-boom teachers, and new requirements for "highly-qualified" teachers through the No Child Left Behind Act, educators and policymakers in the United States may have a even more reason to look at teacher induction, both as a measure for teacher training and a factor in teacher retention (Wang et al., 2003). As Clement (2000) states, "One approach to retention is systemic teacher induction---creating a system in which all new teacher received orientation, support, and mentoring during their beginning years in the profession (p. 329) And the United States certainly has some retention problems: Darling-Hammond (2000, quoted in Andrews and Martin, 2003), states that 10% of U.S. teachers leave after their first year, 20% are gone after three years, and fully 30% have gone by year five. Aside from the above concerns, the loss of trained personnel is a significant problem, not to mention the costs associated in preparing them and then in recruiting and training their replacements.

But educators in the United States, it seems, do not need additional reasons to think about induction, since American induction practices do not, in the research reviewed here, come off looking very good. Wong et al. (2005) call U.S. induction practices "often sporadic, incoherent, and poorly aligned" and add that "they lack adequate follow-up" (p. 383), and they consist mainly of mentoring if they exist at all, features noted by Darling-Hammond & Cobb (1995) as well. Darling-Hammond and Cobb also reported that 48% of teachers participated in some kind of formal induction program in their first year in 1991, while Wang et al. (2003), citing a 2001 study, claims that 56% of new US teachers participated in some sort of formal induction program their first year. Even if this seems an adequate number, Wang et al. also noted that, of 33 states that mandated induction programs, only 22 were really funding them, and there were, in addition, exceptions that excluded many teachers. Further, several studies note that U.S. induction programs often focus on assessing new teachers (Britton, Paine, Pimm, & Raizen, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995; Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997), leading to less openness to observation and possibly increasing the stress of the first year (Martin & Wilson, 2002). Bolam (1995) notes the North American focus on assessment, while also claiming, with mentioning the U.S. specifically, that the induction-as-support model is common in countries suffering from teacher retention difficulties. In a related trend, it is remarked upon that, aside from a focus on assessment, U.S. programs are often designed around an idea of support, or insuring the survival of the new teacher, but not necessarily on helping them to develop as a professional or to teach well (Britton, Paine et al., 2003; Wong et al., 2005).

Whatever reasons one has for an interest in induction, and it seems there may be many such reasons, this paper aims to provide some general principles of the programs in China, Japan, New Zealand, and France, so as to facilitate thought and conversation about induction practices. This must be done with caution, however. Induction practices are widely varied, as are the cultures in which they are embedded, and so it is wise to approach any review of international systems with a wary eye. Attempts to import certain Japanese teaching practices to U.S. classrooms have met with a great deal of difficulty due to deep differences in the culture and profession of teaching (Fernandez, 2002; Fernandez, Cannon, & Chokshi, 2003), and the experiences of these and other researchers and teachers should provide some warning to one who wishes to turn their gaze to the workings of induction. There are levels beyond formal, and even informal, systems which may not be captured in the research, or, even if they are represented, may be ignored in implementation, at the peril of the implementer. Keeping this in mind, this effort will focus on general principles rather than on specific practices, in the hope that general principles of effective induction programs will be more useful than specific instructions which may or may not apply to any particular context. These general principles, of which there are three, broadly encapsulate the features of these programs. This paper begins by briefly laying-out these three principles, with short descriptions of each, and then moves on to cover each in greater detail, with specific examples from the practices of the four nations named above.

MAIN THEMES IN INTERNATIONAL TEACHER INDUCTION PRACTICES:

Not all nations have teacher induction programs, nor are induction programs necessarily national in character. Even within those countries that can be said to have national systems, there is a great deal of difference in structure and practice. The teacher induction practices focused on here are those of countries with some sort of national induction system and that have been the subject of research from the North American point of view. The original focus was to be on Asian countries, specifically China and Japan, but this was expanded to include France and New Zealand. This is a limited view of induction, though a potentially useful one. In keeping with the idea of emphasizing the general principles in induction programs, this paper identifies three major themes which seem to run through most, if not all, of the works drawn upon here. These themes

are best viewed as "ideas to consider" for anyone interested in induction. They are not exactly a set of "best practices," as they do not exist in the same ways, or in the same levels, in every program that has been a subject of research. At the same time, these induction programs do seem to share some features, on a more generalized level, and the repeated appearance of these certain features bears some attention. If nothing else, these three themes represent ideas that should be taken into account in any consideration of induction practices, philosophies, or programs. The three themes are:

1. **Acculturation and Collegiality:** there is a focus, across programs, on the acculturation of new teachers into the profession of teaching, including personal and professional development, practices, content knowledge, and acceptance into the professional community. This acculturation takes many forms, informal and formal, and is a matter of culture and attitude even more than of mandate and policy. Yet formal structures do greatly influence the professional atmosphere, and add to its cooperative nature.
2. **Professionalization, Assistance, and Development:** the programs represented here focus on assistance, rather than assessment and monitoring, or on development, as opposed to psychological and technical support for retention purposes. This focus is due in part to connections with teacher education, testing, certification, and hiring practices.
3. **Multiple Approaches to Induction and Wide Support at All Levels:** multiple levels and approaches to induction were prevalent in the more extensive programs, including not just mentoring and observation but also collaboration, counseling, in- and out-of-school workshops and classes, and release-time options. Of these, new teachers themselves seemed to value some practices more than others. These multi-tiered programs were widely supported and implemented, both within individual schools and districts and at national levels: commitment to induction, often represented by spending, is key.

With these three themes described here briefly, the next task will be to address them individually and in greater depth, with examples from the specific practices of the nations under consideration.

1. **Acculturation and Collegiality**

The first of the themes that stand out in a review of this particular literature is the idea that induction is a process of acculturation that takes place within an atmosphere of collegiality, all of this supported by both formal and informal features of the various systems. These two features are grouped together because they work together: the collegial atmosphere of the schools brings a teacher into their new culture, and the formal and informal practices of acculturation lead to feelings of responsibility that spur collegial interactions.

Induction as acculturation

The notion induction as acculturation will be addressed first. Characterizing these induction programs as sharing an emphasis on acculturation means that they treat new teachers not simply as people getting teaching jobs, but as novices who must be brought into a new culture that features certain skills, ways of thinking and acting, and professional practices. They are joining a professional community, and are in a sense, being formed into people who will fit that community, into teachers. This sense that is conveyed by the ambiguous French term which covers parts of both teacher education and induction, which is *formation* (Pimm, Chazan, & Paine, 2003).

There is a focus, across countries, on developing the new teacher as a skilled, well-rounded professional (Wang & Paine, 2001), and these programs share a definite emphasis on collaboration. The professional community works actively to bring in new teachers, a stance that is sometimes presented as a strong contrast to U.S. practices, where new teachers are isolated from their peers (Wong et al., 2005). Japanese induction practices, which run according to the framework laid out by Monbusho, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Sciences, Sports, and Culture, work to give the new teacher a view of their work from many angles. This general framework, filled in at local levels and implemented by schools according to individual needs, includes a guiding teacher, a reduced teaching load, 90 days of training activities like lectures and trips, a culminating action-research project, and, for about 20% of new Japanese teachers, a summer training cruise on a ship that visits various ports to give new teachers a broadening experience (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995; Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997; Padilla & Riley, 2003; Wray, 1999).

Though the induction process in China is not so tightly mandated as in Japan, different local municipal and provincial governments do set up their own systems. In Shanghai, China, beginning teachers are supported by a strong network of formal assistance including individual mentoring, teaching of various types of public lessons, teaching and research groups, workshops, and even teaching competitions in which they participate (Paine, Fang, & Wilson, 2003; Wang & Paine, 2003). France, in contrast, had a very well-structured national system. The French system, a full first year that combines teaching with development and a research project, yet treats and pays the novice as a teacher and not an intern, is actually induction into a national teaching corps. Teachers in France are civil servants, and are assigned to their schools on a nationwide basis upon completion of their training and first-year of teaching (Pimm et al., 2003).

New Zealand teachers who wish to become registered, a requirement at most secondary schools and a positive credential at primary and pre-primary institutions, can participate in the national two-year long "Advice and Guidance" induction program, in which first-year teachers are funded for a 20% reduced teaching load, the extra time to be used for a variety of purposes. The program is broadly implemented, with some practices taking place all over and others happening only in some areas (Britton, Raizen, & Huntley, 2003; Clement, 2000). Certain pieces are required, such as meetings with colleagues and senior staff, observations, visitations to other classrooms, access to various resources, and a written record of participation in the program (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995), while having a "buddy teacher," off-campus workshops, and other interactions with various faculty and staff are not so often implemented; in fact, implementation in New Zealand is much more sporadic, and less tightly monitored, than, say, Japan (Britton, Raizen et al., 2003).

A collegial atmosphere

As for the second part of this general theme, collegiality, it is a term which reflects the general atmosphere of the schools where the new teachers will inducted into their profession. In some cases, as above the acculturation process is a deliberate reflection of national or state induction policy, but there is also a strong informal component to induction that complements, and sometimes even overshadows, the formal side. This informal side can be described as a general feeling among the educators in Japan, China, and New Zealand that teacher induction is the responsibility of the entire school. Further these countries have embedded expectations of cooperative practice which add to the support received by new teachers. As Britton, Raizen et al. (2003) have found, New Zealand's induction system features:

> "a pervasive culture of belief throughout this system that beginning teachers should be supported. Participants at all levels of the system assume that

> beginning teachers have particular needs and, therefore, the system must pay explicit attention to addressing them. Many beginning teachers state that they feel free to approach almost anyone in their department for advice…This strong culture of support make it easier to implement beginning teacher support programs and activities" (p. 184).

This atmosphere is also noted by Moskowitz (1997), who describes the camaraderie and collegiality found throughout New Zealand schools.

Similar ideas seem to run through schools in Japan and China as well. According to Ma (1992), Chinese teachers hold the idea that induction of new teachers is the responsibility of the whole building, not just the mentor teacher, and Paine, Pimm, Britton, Raizen, & Wilson (2003) emphasize that the new teacher in Shanghai is joining a highly social community of practice. Describing induction in Japan, Wray (1999) claims that the informal help a new teacher receives is considered more important than the formal. Sato (1992) claims that, "Japanese teachers have a strong commitment to their profession and are dedicated to maximizing their own professional growth and that of their peers" (p. 362). This dedication to the professionalization of new teachers is a schoolwide, multi-level phenomenon (Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997), and has been noted in work on Japanese teaching practice (Fernandez, 2003). Additionally, informal opportunities for interaction are central to bringing the new teacher into the culture and practice of teaching (Kinney, 1997). These opportunities for interaction exist not only between the new teacher and their mentor, but also between new teachers, with more experienced teachers, and even with administrators, as "generally-speaking, it is the responsibility of the whole school to ensure that a new teacher succeeds" ((Padilla & Riley, 2003, p. 288). Participation by all within a non-threatening observational atmosphere are also features noted by (Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997).

Informal support facilitated by formal structures

It is also important to note that acculturation and collegiality are supported by both formal and informal features of the various educational systems, which work together to produce the environment in which induction is placed. In many cases, formal arrangements have created conditions amenable to strong informal links between new teachers and their more experienced colleagues. Chinese teachers, for example, have their desks in common rooms and scheduling allows a great deal of time working together (Paine, Fang et al., 2003). Japanese teachers also have their desks all together in common rooms, leading to many opportunities for cooperation and assistance, and an established atmosphere where openness, observation, and critique are regular features, which makes cooperation an expectation (Padilla & Riley, 2003; Sato & McLaughlin, 1992; Wong et al., 2005). Japanese teachers are accustomed to working together, and to critiquing one another, even to a point that seems harsh to US researchers(Padilla & Riley, 2003), yet the focus is on critiquing the lesson, not the person, and the critique is meant to help one develop (Stigler and Hiebert, 1999, cited in (Martin & Wilson, 2002). In Japan, as well as in New Zealand, new teachers are released part time from teaching duties, giving them time to work together with mentors and others, and mentors also have reduced workloads. Part-time instructors are even hired to take over the teaching loads of the new and mentor teachers (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995).

In addition to these features, a major formal piece of these educational systems, which has a great deal of influence on the collegial nature of teaching, is their curriculum standards. China, New Zealand, and Japan also have national curricular standards which heavily influence the collegial teaching atmosphere and thus, new teacher induction. China, for example, has a nationally

mandated curriculum framework which is translated into particular requirements by municipal boards. This curriculum is carefully set out at the prefectural or municipal level, and tested rigorously, so that it must be followed by the teachers (Paine, Fang et al., 2003, Wang & Paine, 2003). The contrived curriculum provides materials, subjects, and support, giving the new teacher areas of focus from which to build good practices and to work on pedagogical content knowledge. The highly structured professional relationships also offer support and opportunities for reflection. Additionally, the contrived curriculum and organized relationships worked together, since the curriculum provided a shared basis for cooperation (Wang & Paine, 2003).

Japan also sets a national curriculum, the particulars of which are determined at the local level, and the fact that Japanese teachers at a school are all working in an agreed upon framework contributes to their ability to work in teams for planning, observation, and professional development (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995; Fernandez, 2002; Fernandez et al., 2003; Padilla & Riley, 2003). New Zealand's national curriculum is more vague, and, unlike China and Japan, its local curriculum is relatively unstructured as well, with teachers having much more freedom to construct lessons. Still, each department puts together a folder of lessons from which new teachers can draw, creating opportunities for collaboration (Britton, Raizen et al., 2003). In each of these countries, the mandated curriculum provides the means, and perhaps the necessity, of working together.

2. Assistance and Development:

The second common theme among induction programs was one of assistance and development. This theme was often presented in contrast to American induction practices, with the general feel that U.S. practices were geared toward support, so that new teachers will not leave, and assessment and monitoring, to make sure new teachers know what they are doing (see introduction). Assessment was contrasted with assistance, with the former producing a more adversarial and closed-off relationship between experienced educators and new teachers, and the latter associated with more open and communicative interactions. Support was separated from development because support merely insures survival and continuation in the field, while development is geared toward the new teacher's becoming, not just a survivor, but a competent professional. The notion that induction is a matter of assistance and development is, like ideas of enculturation and collegiality, a part of the culture of the educational systems in question, and is supported by certain formal structures and practices in the different systems.

In China, Japan, France, and New Zealand, induction is a positive process, with a product in mind: the competent, well-prepared teacher who produces desirable student outcomes (Britton, Paine et al., 2003). The reason for this different focus is partially grounded in the already mentioned widespread feelings of professionalism and collegiality among teachers in some countries, as well as the feeling, especially in Japan, China, and France that a person who becomes a teacher is picking a career for life. These various induction practices view induction as a stage in the new teacher's development, a necessary stage which brings the teacher into the profession (Paine, Pimm et al., 2003). In New Zealand, induction training is seen as the first stage in career-long professional development, and as a transitional period from teacher training, thus calling for both development and assistance (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995). Chinese teachers view induction as a process of becoming a member of a teaching community, the time when the business of teaching is truly learned, a process incomplete after the teacher education experience. Thus induction is about the development of the professional and is done with the support of the community (Ma, 1992). The role of assistance in New Zealand and in Japan is stressed by Moskowtiz (1997), who notes, among his keys for success of induction programs, the minimization of assessment. There is also a recognition that assessment and openness can be

opposed to one another, with Chinese, Japanese, and New Zealand practice emphasizing critique of lessons, helpful to the teacher and in an open environment, over more threatening formal assessment (Britton, Paine et al., 2003).

It is important to note, as always, that all of these practices are rooted in their national and educational cultures, and thus the atmosphere of assistance, and development that runs through these foreign programs is connected to formal structures beyond induction itself. One such structure, a very influential one, is the process of teacher pre-service training. China, for example, has primary and pre-primary teachers completing only middle school and a 3 to 4 year teacher-training program before they are qualified (Cobb, 1999). And Chinese teachers, though "officially" certified when they hit the classroom, are not practically ready to teach; their teacher education classes are seen as a foundation, only about half of what they need to know (Ma, 1992). In fact, new Chinese teachers are reported to have particular troubles with classroom management and lesson planning, which they don't learn in their student teaching experiences (Wang & Paine, 2003). Assistance and development are thus necessary, since, as Paine, Fang et al. (2003) found out, "no-one seemed to think that initial teacher training, by itself, could be sufficient to launch a career" (p. 33). Similarly, Japan's pre-service experience is quite short, two- to –four weeks of teaching after only a few days of observation. Thus, the first-year of teaching, and the induction system, is central to teacher development (Kinney, 1997; Morey, Nakasawa, & Colvin, 1997; Padilla & Riley, 2003; Wray, 1999). Martin & Wilson (2002) go so far as to claim that this practice indicates a Japanese belief that teachers only really learn to teach in the classroom, with collegial support. New Zealand also seems to have rather short pre-service teaching requirements, with several 4-week sessions the norm (Cobb, 1999).

Since the emphasis on assistance and development is often presented in contrast to U.S. practices of assessment and support, fairness demands that connections between U.S. systems and practice also be pointed out. New U.S. teachers have, of pre-service teaching experience, between "eight weeks to two full semesters with most programs averaging 12-15 weeks" along with some programs that use year-long internships (Cobb, 1999). This is in marked contrast to the systems of China, Japan, and New Zealand, and shows why, perhaps, new U.S. teachers are assumed to be qualified to take over as full-time professionals once they graduate from a teacher-training program. This view of a new teacher as a full teacher, or at least a qualified novice, leads to the idea that these professionals must be assessed, not further trained. Taking these differences in pre-service education into account helps one to understand the differences in atmosphere between programs.

In addition to these pre-service requirements, there are some testing and job-search practices that also influence the nature of new-teacher induction. In France and Japan, for example, tests for new teachers are particularly rigorous, and jobs difficult to secure. With rates of passage of pre-service tests like 10-15% (for math teachers in France), or with 10 to 35 times more applicants than licenses (Japan), getting a teaching job is not a rubber-stamp deal (Kinney, 1997; Padilla & Riley, 2003, Pimm et al., 2003). In Japan, there are, in all categories, more applicants than teachers, and of the 72,553 university teacher training program graduates who earned teacher certificates, 13,424, or 18.5 percent got jobs as teachers (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995, P. 127). This phenomenon is noted amongst a number of countries in Wang et al. (2003). In such situations, new teachers are in, past their most difficult assessments, and have a secure position which they will probably keep for a long time. Since they are staying around they have a further stake in development, as their professional peers have a further stake in helping them to develop though assistance. Again, turning to U.S. practice, it is noted that the US tests later, and less

rigorously, than other countries (Wang et al., 2003), and these lower early barriers may make for greater assessment later, as in, during induction.

3. Multiple Approaches to Induction and Wide Support at All Levels:

Another feature shared among many induction programs is the presence of support at various levels and from multiple sources. This widely-based support contributes to the already mentioned notion that induction is a process of professionalization, of a moving from pre-service teacher to a full member of the teaching community (Britton, Paine et al., 2003). As usual, these varied features of induction programs are contrasted to U.S. practice, which mainly seems to focus on mentoring (Wong et al., 2005). Practices in the various other nations included mentoring, but also much more. Of these multiple approaches to induction, some are more popular with new teachers than others, a phenomena worth attending to. It is also important to remember that induction programs of the breadth found in these countries require dedicated support, and at all levels too, from the national and local governments right down to the school staffs.

The many and diverse types of induction activities in New Zealand, Japan, France, and China are detailed above (see the Acculturation and Collegiality section), and will not be repeated here, but it is worth reminding the reader of some salient features. The induction programs featured here include observation by mentors peers, administrators, other educational officials, and groups, as well as teaching specifically for peers, and even for competition; counseling, by a mentor, an outside induction program counselor, or the department head; numerous informal counseling-type opportunities available to teachers in the collegial atmospheres in New Zealand, China, and Japan; lectures and seminars, in and out of school, and visits to other educational sites; and release time from teaching duties for both new teachers, and, in some cases, for mentors and other staff. This variety is consistent with Bolam's (1995) claim that international research had, by the end of the 1970's, recognized some key features in induction programs, including 1) release time, 2) mentoring system, 3) systematic school-based support, planning and observation, 4) planned external activities, and 5) administrative support.

Bolam (1995) also notes that some of these features are more popular than others with new teachers, and, again, his assertions are in line with the other studies included here. He claims, for one thing, that new teachers seem skeptical of overly theoretical training, which was noted in New Zealand (Britton, Raizen et al., 2003) and Japan (Martin & Wilson, 2002; Padilla & Riley, 2003), and that new teachers like to spend time with other new teachers, which seemed to be true all around. They also like release time, a feature of many programs that does not seemed to be maligned by any new teachers. Clement (2000) recommended release time for U.S. teachers, claiming that time is a vital factor in making induction programs work and that not only new teachers, but also principals and experienced teachers in New Zealand also favor the release time program. Finally, Bolam noted that new teachers like to have time with experienced teachers, which they often get, and value, in the collegial and cooperative programs mentioned here.

These comprehensive teacher induction programs obviously require much commitment and effort, and thus it makes sense that support, at all levels, is another feature they share. This support is described as coming from national, state, district, municipal, and school-levels, and within schools from experienced teachers all the way up to department heads, principals, and other administrators. At the school level, this commitment is demonstrated through the levels of collegiality and assistance already mentioned. New teachers in China, New Zealand, and Japan find themselves involved not only with a mentor and their peers, but also with the rest of the teachers and administrators of the schools. Such actions, motivated by feelings of responsibility,

are what make these induction programs possible, especially the informal practices that make up so much of new teacher induction in these countries.

Governmental involvement at several levels in these programs is, in most cases, quite important. China, France, Japan, and New Zealand all have some form of nationally mandated induction programs, and in all the systems studied by Britton et. al, "high-level support, structural commitments and resources were instrumental in induction becoming institutionalized as it is today" (Britton, Paine et al., 2003, p. 3280. In France, this represents a great deal of commitment by the central government particularly, as French teachers are classed as civil servants and paid by the government, receiving full teacher salaries even in their first year, when they teach only part of the week (Pimm et al., 2003). New Zealand's central government also forks over the money for induction, as it funds the ".2," the 20% release time for first-year teachers (Britton, Raizen et al., 2003), though induction programs are also partially funded at the province level (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995). Clement (2000) acknowledges this financial commitment when she predicts that the biggest obstacle to use of New Zealand-style release time in U.S. practice would be funding. New Zealand local units are also involved in induction, as individual boards of trustees recruit, appoint, and appraise teachers (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995).

In Japan, the national government, through Monbusho, provides not only a flexible but centralized plan for induction, but also oversees supporting classes for the new teachers' 60 required days of out-of-school training. Additionally, the government has mandated that teachers' salaries will be 10% higher than equivalent civil service jobs (Padilla & Riley, 2003) and has had to spend a lot to put this expensive program into place (Wray, 1999). The national government covers not only all the out school training costs, but half of the personnel costs to cover the lecturer hired to allow the release time for training, though the local appointing authority (the prefecture) pays for the rest, showing multi-level involvement (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995). Chinese funding shows multi-level support, as responsibility for it is divided between the national, prefectural, and local levels (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995). In both China and Japan, the municipal and prefectural boards and organizations are, aside from their funding commitments, vital policymakers in terms of induction practice and curriculum (Padilla & Riley, 2003; Paine, Fang et al., 2003). Such national involvement in education may spread to other nations. Cobb (1999) has suggested that, connections between good education and national economic competitiveness have countries to increase emphasis on teacher quality, and this emphasis has led to changes to longer and more rigorous teacher education programs and student teaching and/or internship experiences.

CONCLUSION:

This review has looked at a set of studies which speak to teacher induction practices in China, France, Japan, and New Zealand. This look at the literature of induction, from North American sources and with an international focus, produced three major themes which ran across the induction practices in the above countries: 1) induction as a collegial process of acculturation, 2) induction as a process characterized by assistance and development, and 3) induction as a multi-tiered approach, carried out, and supported, at various levels. These three basic themes best sum up the characteristics of these induction programs, and can act as guides for those who wish to reflect upon induction practice or, perhaps, even plan and implement it.

Care must be exercised, however, in the application of the lessons of these programs. There has been an effort made here to acknowledge the cultural embeddedness of various practices, and, further, to frame the above themes in very general terms for wider applicability. Still, context is vital. Fernandez' work on implementing Japanese "lesson study" practices in the United States

shows how deeply-held cultural beliefs can have unintended consequences for the adoption of other countries' ideas (Fernandez, 2002; Fernandez et al., 2003). Going further, it is also important to note that, just because induction practices are different in one country vs. another, difference in practice does not necessarily indicate difference in quality. LeTendre (1999) warns specifically against making "better" and "worse" comparisons, maintaining that they actually prevent, rather than foster, meaningful conversation about international education research. He calls for attention to a wide variety of factors, from national attitudes toward education to curriculum to actual classroom practice and school culture, to promote useful comparisons which might actually help both sides. Wang et al. (2003) point out, practically speaking, that the size of the United States, as well as constitutional separation of powers between the state and federal governments, may make some other countries' systemic ideas inapplicable.

And yet, even with these warnings, there may be some useful ideas to be found in the practices of other nations, however situated those practices might be. Britton et al (2003), in there wide-ranging work on induction in five countries, do not encourage the use of various ideas without attention to where they come from, nor do they express unqualified admiration of these countries' practice, but they do cautiously suggest that the social construction of the philosophy and implementation of induction, the very issue which leads to difficulties in making cross-cultural comparisons, also makes it possible to imagine new ways of doing things. Paine et. al. (2003), drawing from the work of Britton et al, acknowledge the differences across programs, yet see their commonalities as containing potentially helpful lessons: in fact, they suggest a focus on the making of professionals as a central lesson from international induction practice.

That being said, it is justifiable to claim that the themes noted here may be helpful in imagining new ways of thinking about, and carrying out, teacher induction. The three themes around which this paper is constructed offer three ways of thinking about how induction works in some places, and how it might be made to work in others. Teaching is, by all accounts, difficult to do well, and especially so for those who are just starting out. The themes in this paper, of acculturation and collegiality, of assistance and development, and of multi-level programs with multi-level support, do not suggest one solution, or even a line of solutions. Instead, this multiplicity of themes and practices make it clear that induction is a complicated process, carried out at in many places and requiring support and hard work by many people, individually and in groups. Any proposed change in induction must take all of this into account in order to find some measure of success. Perhaps this, then, is the best piece of advice to take from a review of induction literature: change can happen, but it must be undertaken with a full understanding of the complexity involved, and with the willingness to put forth the effort required in order to make and to sustain the proposed changes. With that in mind, new possibilities may be imagined at will.

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