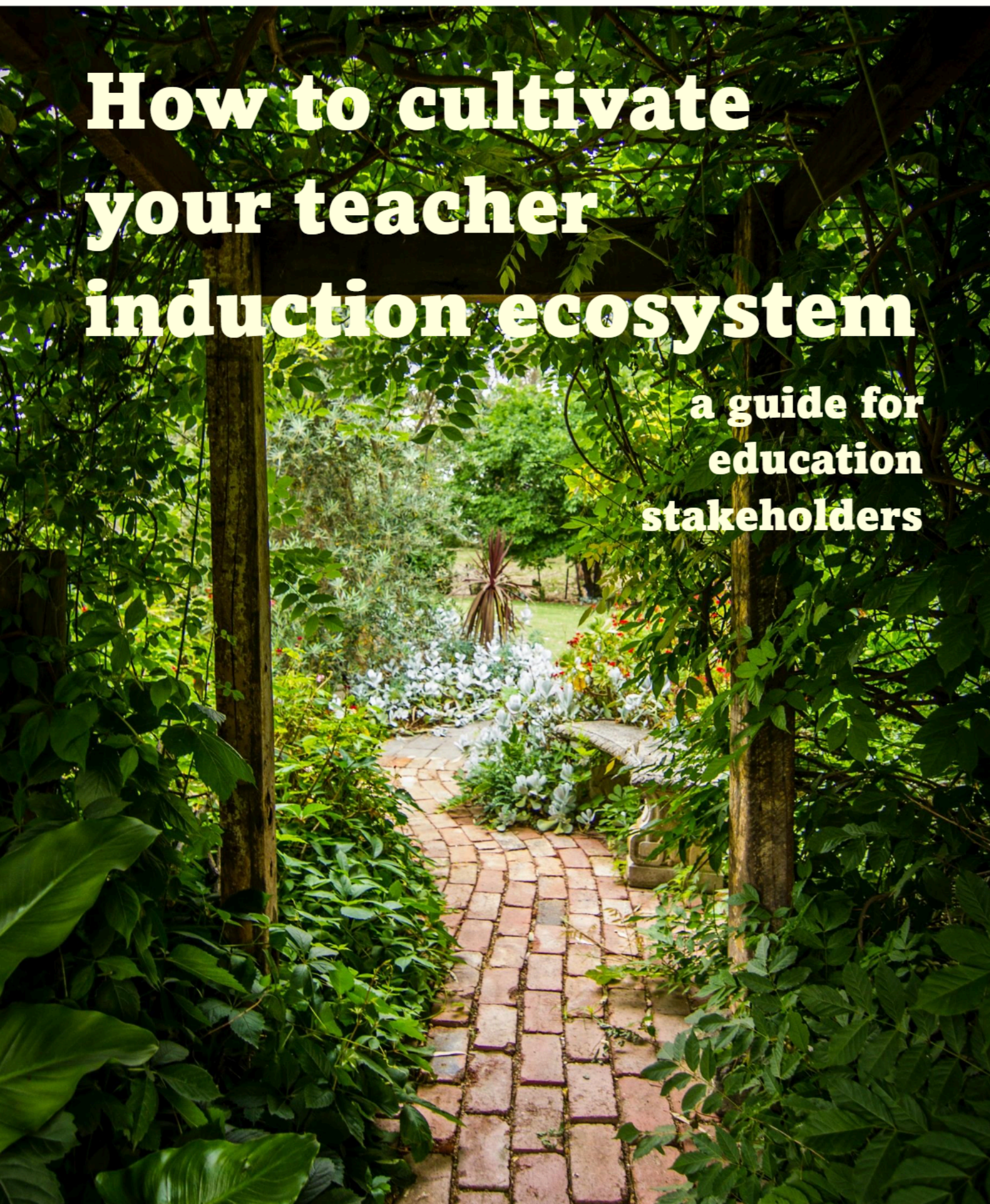


How to cultivate your teacher induction ecosystem

**a guide for
education
stakeholders**



About this guide

In their pan-European project **TeacherEd**, the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) explored capacity building in new teacher induction. ‘New teacher induction’ is the process by which school teachers are supported in their first year(s) of employment. It is an important transition point from Initial Teacher Education.

This guide is based on the project’s co-constructed knowledge about current practices in new teacher induction and reflections on how things might be done in the future. In other words, how to enable actors and their practices to adapt to changing circumstances and, specifically, to build the capacity of education employers.

The aim is not to present a single, fixed model of new teacher induction but to guide stakeholders in looking at their own current induction ecosystem and their roles within it; reflecting on what there is (and is not); and starting to make plans or decisions for the future.



Cover photo by [Tim Cooper](#) on [Unsplash](#)

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project comprised desk research, a two-part European survey, two peer learning activities and a stakeholder conference.

All project outputs are publicly available: a working paper of recent research, two survey reports, event summaries, policy recommendations, and this guide.

<https://educationemployers.eu/teachered-page/>

This guide structures the process of reflection and design into different thematic sections. Education stakeholders may choose to look at one or more of these in detail. Each section describes guiding **principles** as food for thought, **cultivation** ideas that might be acted on and the optimal conditions for development, as well as common pitfalls and challenges to **take care** with.

The guide is intended primarily for school education employers and other actors responsible for human resources, as well as education agency and policy officers responsible for infrastructure, resources and monitoring.

An ‘ecosystem’ approach

Based on contemporary education research theory, the project and this guide considers teacher induction as an **ecosystem** of actors and their practices. This is because actors and practices interact, to the extent that many, if not all, are mutually beneficial. The interdependence contributes to the relative effectiveness of induction to be a supportive process for teachers at the start of their careers.

Ecosystems in nature may be independent, or partially and physically constructed by humans: gardens, ponds and rivers, forests, and beaches. Man-made or abstract ecosystems also exist, such as power generators and distributors, or open data sharing. Each has optimal conditions for sustainability and evolution, and they may be influenced by outside forces.

Induction ecosystems are similar to those that support Initial

Teacher Education (ITE) and Continued Professional Development (CPD). The three may be considered sub-systems of Teacher Education and of the wider education ecosystem. Countries and regions have different education climates – different existing approaches, problems, and priorities. Cultivating what is already there, and encouraging new growth in things not yet tried, will depend on the environmental conditions and the feeding and nourishing of actors and practices.

‘Growing’ does not always mean getting bigger. It can mean ‘evolving’ which could be staying the same size and changing features or dying off and being reborn.

‘Cultivating’ can also mean growing or maintaining, focuses both on improvement of the thing and its surrounding environment.

Contents

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 – Cultivating your style of ecosystem | 4 – Identifying and supporting your main cultivators |
| 2 – Defining a coherent plan with robust structures | 5 – Monitoring and developing your ecosystem |
| 3 – Blending different practices in optimal conditions | 6 – Coping with seasonal change |

1 - Cultivating your style of ecosystem

Principles

A supportive culture

The behaviours and discourse of an induction ecosystem – the way that all the different actors speak about and behave towards new teachers – will have developed over time and need to be supportive. The discourse may be dominated by ideas about teaching, or about being a teacher, or may be influenced by workforce demands such as numbers of teachers.

The existing culture may be to prioritise the needs of the individual teacher, or the needs of schools, or the needs of the system. Attitudes and approaches may have to shift to respond to all needs.

Clear purpose

Induction ecosystems function well when the actors understand the aims - why induction exists - and there are clear expectations of actors and outcomes. Not all actors need to have the same or shared aims. In ecosystems, different organisms can strive for different things and still co-exist and mutually benefit from their relationships.

Rewilding encourages evolution

In the past, an induction ecosystem may have been shaped or

constrained to serve one purpose or ensure an identical approach by all actors. Whilst this may seem efficient, it risks losing the engagement and creativity - and therefore quality - of support. In nature, 'rewilding' means to encourage biodiversity and evolution. A similar approach in education means to encourage innovation.

Rivers have been forced to run in straight lines and transport resources quicker for economic gain. Encouraging rivers to rediscover their natural winding paths has supported diverse species to thrive. This may be a metaphor for approaches to education.

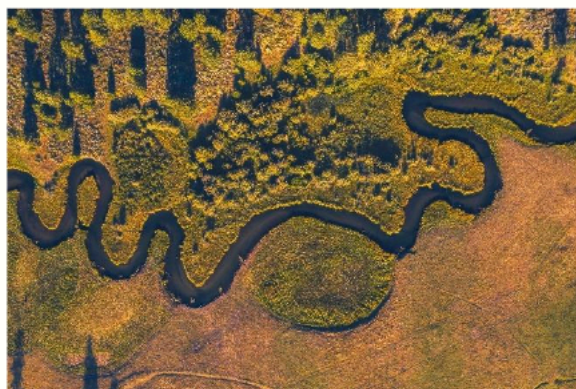


Photo by [Dan Meyers](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Cultivation

Dig into your aims

Consider the purpose of new teacher induction and the way that actors in your ecosystem understand it.

The goal of recruiting and retaining more teachers is a quantifiable workforce target. This needs to be coupled with other goals of teacher competence and well-being to make sure that induction is a positive first step in a professional journey, and one that new teachers are more likely to continue.

Promote regeneration

Make sure that actors who are supporting new teachers are aware that induction is an opportunity to explore pedagogical practice and learn from others, including the ideas of new teachers. This requires a culture of peer learning. It is important that all actors value and promote induction as a process in which to develop themselves and others as professionals.

Supporting teachers to integrate into their new schools and develop their identity is crucial to their development in their first year. Promoting a narrative of mutual benefits for teachers and schools can help.

Identify and be explicit about needs

Consider ways that new teacher (employee) motivations and needs can be made clear and set alongside school and system goals. This may require communication from

authorities such as the school board, education agency or ministry. ITE providers may benefit from guidance on fully preparing their students for employment. Employers may benefit from Human Resources Management (HRM) guidelines or training.



Take care

Avoid deficit-thinking

The narrative that new teachers still lack competences is a barrier to schools appreciating a new teacher's input. It may undermine professional relationships and the confidence of new teachers, including those making a career change to teaching.

Note multiple dimensions

Be aware of the different cultural dimensions of new teacher induction. Actors are influenced by personal and social, as well societal and political, goals and issues. One dimension may dominate to the detriment of others.

Address negative discourse

Be careful with the language used in public reporting and the news media because negative attitudes will affect the motivation and well-being of new teachers, undermining recruitment and retention efforts.

2 - Defining a coherent plan with robust structures

Principles

Continuum of teacher education

Understanding professional development as a continual pathway of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), induction into the profession, and then career-long professional learning opportunities helps to foster quality and support a sense of career progression. The transition from the initial preparation that a new teacher has is a crucial bridge and induction should provide a logical continuation.

Professional standards

A set of professional standards – the competences* that an education system believes teachers should possess - is often used as guidance for multiple actors in that system: teachers, school leaders, ITE providers, and inspectors.

*Competences – knowledge, skills and attitudes or behaviours

Professional standards are typically created by ministries or their agencies, with or without consultation of the professional community. These professional standards may be adapted and

used for different purposes in an induction ecosystem.

Cultivation

Set an appropriate length of induction

Consider if an induction period should be one year - the first year of employment, allowing for focused support - or extended to two years, maintaining some of the supportive practices. Alternatively, consider developing a sustained approach with 1 year of induction as part of a longer 4-5 plan for Early Career Teachers (ECTs).

Decide if induction is mandatory or voluntary

Making induction compulsory for all new teachers is a decision for system authorities or for employers in their own region/school.

Compulsory induction guarantees at least a basic level of support, promising all teachers a better start, which may be attractive to teachers that are considering where they would like to work. It places larger demands on ecosystem resources, but this should be weighed against the benefits.

Use or adapt professional standards

Existing professional standards for teachers may create a coherent framework for all actors to shape support. They could be used for the reflection of teachers and their mentors, professional development opportunities created by local authorities or external organisations, or visits by inspectors. If the same standards are used in ITE, they add coherence to the full professional development journey.

Consider if an adapted version is necessary to be more specific about expectations for new teachers in their first years along a career path of continued development. Accompanying standards or guidelines may specify expectations for other supportive actors, such as mentors.

Be flexible for different teachers

To support teachers in different contexts, allow induction practices and processes to be flexible or adapted from the traditional route of full-time teaching of curriculum subjects at primary or secondary level. Flexibility supports new teachers that are seeking part-time employment, that are working across schools with Special Educational Needs pupils, or that

are working in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).

Consider how induction links to licensing

If graduates of ITE are automatically licensed as teachers, induction exists as an additional period of support. If a period of induction is a requirement before a full license is granted, then all teachers must be guaranteed induction. Enough teaching posts must be available to all graduates and these posts should be in schools that can support new teachers. This is a joint task for school leaders, employers, and regional and national authorities.



Take care

Avoid overwhelming demands

Having many professional standards or strict requirements for documentation and evidence can be overwhelming to new teachers and their supportive colleagues. It may inhibit creativity in developing their own pedagogy.

Be aware that licensing processes - requirements, examinations, public lists of teacher grades – can be useful but also may be counterproductive to the induction period if they add unnecessary bureaucracy or are intimidating to new teachers.



Robust structures such as professional standards, formal qualification requirements, and core induction design can help to support actors whilst allowing for flexible routes and practices.

Photo by [K Adams](#) on [Unsplash](#)

3 - Blending different practices in optimal conditions

Principles

Ecosystems may incorporate many supportive practices

There are many ways to support new teachers in an induction period, including: mentoring and coaching; in-school or external offers of courses and seminars; self-reflection activities (portfolios, diaries, journals); networking, peer groups, and informal conversations; an adjusted teaching load; collaborative lesson design and team teaching; and formal appraisal at the end of induction. Actors will need to make informed choices regarding as to which are the most appropriate. This will depend on teachers' needs but may also depend on the expertise of local supporters or their preferences for certain approaches.

Practices are interrelated

Supportive approaches depend on the existence of others in a symbiotic relationship. For example, mentoring as a practice requires the practice of giving both new and experienced teachers dedicated time together for reflective dialogue. Even if a

singular approach is taken, or approaches are lacking, practice gaps may be filled. For example, new teachers that feel unsupported by their schools might look online for webinars and chat rooms, but these may be small-scale if they depend on volunteers or limited funding.

Resources are necessary

Actors requires adequate time, tools, and opportunities to deploy - and also to improve - induction practices. These resources must be evenly distributed if all new teachers and their supporters are to benefit from them and if the whole ecosystem is to function well.

Cultivation

Be systematic when introducing new practices

New practices may be tested at a smaller scale, such as in a few schools or one region. Local universities may offer expertise based on research evidence and help to analyse the outcomes of pilot projects.

Note where practices are interrelated

Encouraging symbiosis and mutual beneficial practices is good for an induction ecosystem: it is more efficient in investment and practices are more likely to be accepted and sustained. Therefore, consider where practices could complement each other better. This may require a shift in attitudes, for example where teachers are wary of peer observation because of the use of observation as a high stakes practice by inspectors.

Encourage adaptation

Encourage practices to be adapted locally to address teacher needs and operate well within the local culture. Supportive actors may naturally do this by co-designing with their colleagues or they may be engaged in networking and cross-system sharing. Induction ecosystems can embrace system variation as long as new teachers are ultimately well-supported.

Allocate funding

Funding for induction support may be given directly to schools or indirectly, such as via local education bureaux or educational organisations. This may be in line with existing funding channels but allocating funding specifically for induction will help to ensure at

least a basic level of support.

Adapting to their own needs or 'buying time' for staff may be harder if schools do not receive direct financial support.



Take care

Time is a sensitive issue

Time for induction support needs to be allocated within the working week of new and experienced teachers, however there may be resistance to reducing teaching time, especially where there are existing staff shortages.

Evaluation practices may further isolate teachers

Carefully consider observation, or any practice, that is associated with summative assessment. Whilst this might be a useful part of recognising progress, negative attitudes towards feeling judged or delicate staff relationships may prevent their effectiveness.

Online support does not replace all other practices

Online support can be flexible, particularly for teachers in remote areas, but when used on its own, the induction support is not necessarily related to in-school practice.



Practices are interdependent, requiring optimal conditions to thrive. They are more likely to be effective when actors are competent and are themselves supported with guidance and resources.

Photo by [Jonathan Kemper](#) on [Unsplash](#)

4 - Identifying and supporting your main cultivators



Identifying supporters

Actors are not suited to be supporters of ECTs based on personal experience alone. Induction ecosystems need to identify motivated and competent actors and then offer training to these professionals so that they can effectively support new teachers over a period of time.

Knowing what works

To offer effective support, actors need to have a good (better) understanding of what works in induction, informed by research and experience.

Defining responsibilities and accountability

Actors should be clear about who offers or manages what within induction. Each new teacher should also be aware of their own professional responsibility to develop their own practice and the autonomy that they have from the start of their career.

Incentives and rewards

If supporting new teachers is seen as a professional duty of all teachers, then specific financial

remuneration may undermine this attitude. However, mentor roles may feature as part of certain teacher contracts and higher salary grades. To remain motivated, teachers that are supporters will require recognition and support themselves, including protected time for the role.



Attract and support mentors

Mentoring is proven to be a highly influential and effective approach. However, mentors require certain competences to ensure that it is mutually beneficial. Consider what level of training is offered or required to be a mentor, from short voluntary courses to part-time HE-level training with degree credits.

Define employer roles and communication

School management must be engaged in new teacher induction and are well-placed to co-ordinate in-school support. Guidance for all schools may be useful.

National or regional co-ordinators of professional development can ensure that new teachers are

receiving opportunities and can check their progress and needs. They may work directly with new teachers or co-ordinate with school management.

Government agencies can check for variation of supportive practices and facilitate the sharing of practices, for example through education agency regional meetings.

Education employers exist within different organisations and are connected to others through the practices of induction ecosystems.



Incorporate additional supportive actors

University-based teacher educators already exist in the ecosystem, having provided Initial Teacher Education. With incentives and remuneration, they are able to support new teacher induction by offering mentor and school leader training, and professional learning on a range of

topics, as well as undertake new research.

Professional organisations, such as those dedicated to specific curriculum subjects, offer teacher support and may be funded to focus on new teachers in their first years.



Take care

Do not forget rewards

All actors need to appreciate the mutual benefits (symbiosis) of engaging in new teacher induction. Be careful not to demand extra work of supporters that is unsustainable.

Obliging supporters to train for their role also requires some reward and avoiding creating extra burden, particularly for in-school mentors.

Feed practice development with funding

Depending on their own role in the ecosystem, some actors may have to reach out or apply for funding or partnership work to be effective new teacher supporters. System authorities should take care that these opportunities are not missed.

5 - Monitoring and developing your ecosystem

Principles

Monitoring to identify needs

As the induction ecosystem evolves, it is useful to monitor the influence of different practices; both those that are new and those that are well-established.

Monitoring can identify needs and where there are gaps, as well as help to understand the ecosystem as a whole and its driving forces.

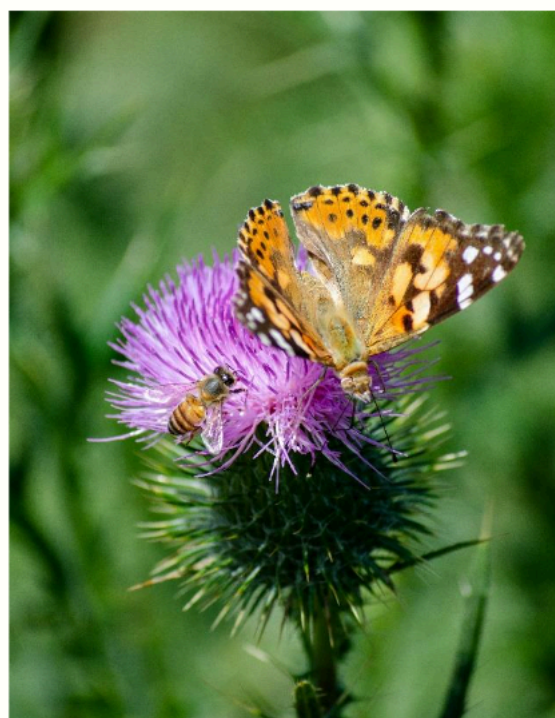
All engaged actors can listen and reflect

Whilst system-wide new teacher induction may be overseen by ministries or national agencies actors, local monitoring by employers can draw out the nuances of actor experiences in their unique contexts. This is important for local adaptation of practices.

Useful feedback from new teachers depends on the quality and type of data

Quantitative data may be generated to show how many new teachers are satisfied with their support, how many engage in professional development courses, or how many are thinking of leaving the profession.

Other methods may capture better the nuances of new teacher lived experiences and the influence of induction practices. These include formal focus group interviews or informal anecdotal evidence from induction support sessions.



In nature, the presence of certain insects or plants can indicate where things or processes are functioning well, or not. In education, actors need to monitor their induction ecosystem to inform decision-making.

Photo by [silas Tarus](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Cutting back or adding in

Decisions may be made to modify certain induction practices because of a lack of available resources or to simplify the approach. Sometimes practices evolve in a haphazard way or overlap if actors have been developing them separately and require more coherence. Practices developed in one region might be supported to be offered nationally.



Engage employers in monitoring and development

Consider the ways that employers already generate data on the development and needs of their new teachers and how those data are shared (or not) and acted upon (or not). Some surveys or portfolio content may only have consent for local sharing. Guidance to schools on new teacher induction may usefully include suggestions for reflecting on practice.

Use network meetings and conference events to facilitate the useful sharing of knowledge and practice between municipalities and regions.

Collaborate between school, local and university actors

Consider ways for teacher educators in HE to contribute to monitoring and development by designing research projects in collaboration with other actors for mutual benefit.

Work with the inspectorate

If the inspectorate is involved in monitoring the preparedness of student teachers and the competence of all teachers, then inspectors may pay special attention to new teachers in their first years and the kind of support that they are receiving. This information can be shared with other actors.



Take care

Be careful with sudden additions or cuts

Adding more practices and demands risks overloading the ecosystem and draining resources. Take care not to over-complicate the landscape.

On the other hand, sudden cuts may leave gaps that 'shock' the ecosystem. Consider the best time to modify services and how far to change.

6 - Coping with seasonal change

Principles

Adapting to outside forces

The wider education ecosystem – of which induction is a sub-system – exerts forces that can affect the discourse, priorities, resources relating to new teachers and supporting their professional development.

Coping with forces means to know of them and predict them, and to be adaptable to their influence in order that the ecosystem can continue to flourish, rather than become stagnant.

Political priorities or new governing party declarations can rapidly filter down into teacher education. News media stories and international reports, including observations made on the basis of PISA and TALIS, can also be catalysts.

Change is necessary

Change needs to happen from time to time depending on forces in wider society, for example the advances in digital technology, the mobility of citizens, and pandemics.

As a result, demands on the education system and on the

teaching profession change, influencing what is considered important for new teachers to prepare for.

Change may also be influenced by internal ecosystem shifts. The attention given to, or the popularity of, certain induction or pedagogical practices may rise and fall as knowledge and attitudes change.

Cultivation

Address staff shortage issues

A common pressure is that temporary staff shortages - sickness, unfilled positions - cause teachers to have less time and they then deprioritise induction practices with new teachers. Whilst absent staff may be covered by temporary teaching staff at a cost, time for induction may need to be protected in some way.

Offer support on education priorities

New teachers should be offered targeted support for dealing with issues that are school, regional or national priorities, such as improved communication with parents, boosting literacy, or integrating children from migrant families.

Consider appropriate legislation

For some induction practices, it may be useful to introduce legislation or enforce requirements. The benefit of this is ensuring that effective practices are sustained and are less likely to suffer because of temporary educational ‘trends’ or other forces that cut support. One example is the formal requirement of mentoring to exist and with protected time and training.

Induction ecosystems need to prepare for the impact of sudden outside forces, as well as be adaptable during periods of change.



Photo by [Marcus Woodbridge on Unsplash](#)



Photo by [John Price on Unsplash](#)

Take care

Maintain a broad understanding of induction

Be aware of shifting attitudes and a narrow interpretation of induction that is only about supporting the classroom teaching role or acting as a fast-track to filling classroom teaching vacancies. Supporting the development of professional identity and the well-being of ECTs may become less of a priority.

Be aware of societal forces that can affect collaboration

Trends in the national economy or in political discourse may seek to change the role of universities or promote competition amongst private enterprises. Be aware of these shifts as they may also affect the way that actors are able to collaborate or contribute to induction practices.

Please cite this publication as:

European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE), 2025. *'How to cultivate your teacher induction ecosystem' – a guide for education stakeholders*, European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE). Available at <https://educationemployers.eu/teachered-page/>

TeacherEd

The 'TeacherEd' project was a pan-European research-oriented initiative 2023 – 2025 investigating current practices and future possibilities in new teacher induction.

More on the project and published outputs:

<https://educationemployers.eu/teachered-page/>



The European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) represents the interests of employers in the European education sector, from pre-school to higher education and research. Our mission is to improve the quality of teaching and of education management through European cooperation and dialogue. EFEE acts on behalf of its members as an officially recognised European social partner in education to EU institutions.

More information and contact details: <https://educationemployers.eu/>



Co-funded by
the European Union

