From Preparation to Practice: Designing a Continuum to Strengthen and Sustain Teaching

Feiman-Nemser, Sharon

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Abstract:
This paper was written to stimulate discussions and debate about what a professional learning continuum from initial preparation through the early years of teaching could be like. Drawing on a broad base of literature, the author proposes a framework for thinking about a curriculum for teacher learning over time. The paper also considers the fit (or misfit) between conventional approaches to teacher preparation, induction and professional development and the challenges of learning to teach in reform-minded ways and offers examples of promising programs and practices at each of these stages. The paper is organized around three questions: (a) What are the central tasks of teacher preparation, new teacher induction, and early professional development? (b) How well do conventional arrangements address these central tasks? (c) What are some promising programs and practices at each stage in the learning to teach continuum that promote standards-based teaching and enable teachers to become active participants in school reform?

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